

Padilla Bay Newsletter

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

Winter 2016-2017



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
www.padillabayfoundation.org
PO Box 1305
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 757-3234
foundation@padillabay.gov

For more news, research updates, program details, see our website at www.padillabay.gov.

To request materials in a format for the visually impaired, call the Reserve at 360-428-1558, Relay Service 711, or TTY 877-833-6341.

Publication No. 16-06-031



A New Invader Arrives in Padilla Bay

It finally happened. In August of this year, a volunteer team in Wescott Bay on San Juan Island caught the first European Green Crab in Washington's inland waters. Then in September, Padilla Bay educator, Glen (Alex) Alexander found a Green Crab under a rock while leading an intertidal education program. This initiated immediate large scale responses by the Crab Team from Washington Sea Grant, WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife and Padilla Bay Reserve. Why all the fuss?

The European Green Crab, *Carcinus maenas*, is an aggressive invader of temperate waters around the world. These Western Europe natives have traveled the globe hitching rides on hulls and in ballast water of ships, in algae and seaweeds used for packing live seafood and naturally on ocean currents. They are efficient predators and can out-compete (or eat) juvenile native crabs of similar size. Green crab are especially fond of young clams and oysters, marine worms and small crustaceans and have damaged eelgrass beds by disrupting sediment while searching for food.

Green Crab arrived on the East Coast of North America in 1817 where they were associated with the collapse of New England's softshell clam industry. On the West Coast, Green Crab appeared in San Francisco Bay in 1989 and moved steadily south and north. Here in the Puget Sound, biologists and volunteers have been on the lookout for Green Crab since the late 1990s, actively setting traps to alert us when they arrived. Intensive trapping this fall (562 traps) caught 3 additional Green Crabs.

While capturing any Green Crab in Padilla Bay and the Salish Sea is disconcerting, the early discovery and rapid assessment by local volunteers and agencies gives us the best chance of developing an informed and proactive response to the invasion. For more information on European Green Crab and information on how you can help stop its spread, please see the following websites: wsg.washington.edu/crabteam http://wdfw.wa.gov/ais/carcinus_maenas/.



How You Can Help

Grassroots involvement is the core of Padilla Bay Foundation's commitment to protecting our estuaries and supporting the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Members of the Padilla Bay Foundation contribute directly to environmental education and research at Washington State's only Estuarine Research Reserve.

Memberships can be for multiple years. Please consider payment of 2 or 3 years at a time, as this will save the Foundation considerable labor and mailing costs and insure that your dues work harder supporting the programs you care about.

Categories of membership are:

Senior/Student	\$25
Individual	\$35
Family	\$50
School/Organization	\$50+
Supporting	\$75
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
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New AmeriCorps staff

Welcome to Claire Cook and Emilee Carpenter. This is Claire's second year serving as an AmeriCorps member following her graduation from The Evergreen State College. Before coming to Padilla Bay, she was Volunteer Coordinator with the Nisqually Land Trust in Olympia. Emilee graduated from Western Washington University in May with a degree in Environmental Education. Read more about Emilee and Claire on our website where you can also subscribe to the electronic newsletter. www.padillabay.gov.

Foundation Board Members

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Presentations for December, January, and February 2016-17

Upland to Bay to Skagit Flats: Winter Birds with Libby Mills

Our hardy resident birds are busy with winter foraging, while migrants from the north are filling the fields and bays. Come explore the uplands, farmland, and waters around Padilla Bay with Libby Mills. Bring warm layers and a snack. Binoculars are available for those who need them. We'll meet at the Interpretive Center parking lot. **Friday, January 6 and Sunday, January 8, 9:00AM-12:00 noon.** Please register online or call the Interpretive Center.

Introduction to Hawks of the Skagit

Learn to recognize the most common species in our area with raptor biologist and falcon aficionado, Bud Anderson. A slide presentation from 9:00AM-11:00AM will introduce you to raptor biology, field characteristics, and common behaviors. The afternoon field trip runs until around 2:00PM and is limited to 15 participants. **Saturday, January 7, 10:00AM-12:00 noon.** Register online or by phone. There is a separate registration for the field trip.



Community Energy Challenge

Did you know there is an amazing local resource that makes it easy to create a more comfortable, durable, and energy efficient home? Experts from the Community Energy Challenge (CEC), a local energy efficiency program, will share how to make smart decisions for your home that will save you money and keep you comfy. You'll come away understanding energy audits, how to identify cost effective projects that give the largest impact, the benefits of energy efficiency improvements, exclusive incentives, and how the CEC can help you navigate your project. The talk will also focus on renewable energy and net zero homes. There will be plenty of time for Q&A, so come with your home energy efficiency questions! **Saturday, January 21, 1:00-2:00PM.** Please call or register online.

Aquarium Tour and Fish Feeding

Come and find out what's new and exciting in our aquariums. Join aquarist, Mark Olson for a behind-the-tanks view of the system, and a close-up look at the amazing critters in the tanks. **Saturday, January 28, 11:00AM.** No need to register. Just join us in the aquarium room at 11:00.

The Breazeale Interpretive Center is open

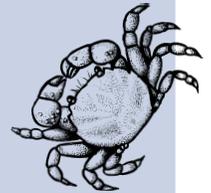
Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00AM-5:00PM

Closed December 24 & 25

Register online or by phone

www.padillabay.gov

(360) 428-1558

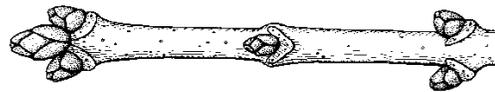


Swans in the Skagit Valley

The swan is a mythical creature that reaches back to the earliest human cultures. Each year, the Skagit is the winter home to thousands of swans that nest in the arctic. Martha Jordan, biologist with Northwest Swan Conservation Association will present swan mythology and life history, as well as current issues and tips for finding and observing swans without disturbing them. **Saturday, February 11, 1:00-2:30PM.** Please call or register online.

Winter Botany

Methuselah's beard, teasing teasels, equisetum equalizer! Join a local naturalist to find out more about ethnobotanical uses of these plants and many more. We'll identify plants by studying their bark and buds. Bring a snack to supplement any wild edibles we might encounter. Instructors: Marlee Osterbauer and Jerome Janson. **Saturday, February 25, 2:00-4:00PM.** Please call or register online.



Raptor Class

The Skagit Flats are nationally recognized for their hundreds of wintering birds of prey. This class will teach you about different kinds of raptors, emphasizing field identification and the particularly fascinating element of winter behavior. Instructor Bud Anderson has studied raptors for over 35 years, and has an incredible knowledge of local populations and peregrine falcons. This 5 week class meets Tuesdays from 7:00-9:00PM beginning January 10, with a Saturday field trip. The class fee is \$175 per person. To register, send check or money order to the Falcon Research Group, PO Box 248, Bow, WA 98232.

Monthly Youth Programs Offer Fun Learning

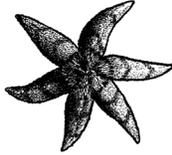
Mini Explorers are the 3-5 year old learners. We look at a new topic each month, with stories, games, hands-on observations, art projects, and plenty of action. Call the Interpretive Center to register or register online.

December 14 & 15, 10:00AM & 1:00PM

Wrack and Wreath—*Come and sift through treasures left by the waves and create wonderful holiday decorations.*

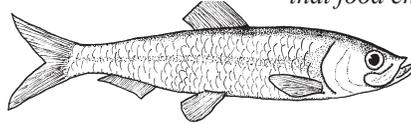
January 18 & 19, 10:00AM & 1:00PM

Stars of the Sea—*Meet a sea star face to face and find out all about these colorful creatures and their spiny friends.*



February 8 & 9, 10:00AM & 1:00PM

High Tide, Low Tide - *Life's not so easy for estuary animals when the water goes away. Find out what animals and plants do to cope with the changing tide.*



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.

December 16 & 17, 10:30AM-12:00 noon

Wrack and Wreath – *Awaken your inner artist and create wonderful holiday decorations using natural treasures from Padilla Bay.*

January 13 & 14, 10:30AM-12:00 noon

Echinoderms: the Sea Star Clan—*Stars, urchins, cucumbers and more, these relatives have amazing secrets to share.*

February 17 & 18, 10:30AM-12:00 noon

Forage Fish—*Though some folks get excited about great big, flashy fish, we get excited about the small ones. Come learn all about the little guys in Padilla Bay who help keep that food chain connected.*



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