



# THE BRANT

SUMMER

FRIENDS OF DUNGENESS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

2023

## Volunteer Appreciation Banquet

In July, Friends hosted the Volunteer Appreciation Banquet. The last event held was in February 2020, just before everything closed down. So this summer we celebrated three years of volunteering instead of just one. It was great to all get together again.



Dave Falzetti presents Volunteer of the Year Awards to: Laura Davis, 2022; Ellie Ausmus, 2021; and Jason West, 2020. Photo: Gary Tarleton/USFWS



Volunteers enjoy a delicious meal under the tent on a beautiful July afternoon.



Dave and Ellie present Lizzie Baatz with a backpack for earning the most volunteer hours over the past three years. Photo: Gary Tarleton/USFWS



Handsome hardware for the Volunteer of the Year awards. Photo: Laura Davis.

*See additional banquet photos on p.17*



# President's Message

By Ellie Ausmus

## The End of Our Volunteer Season – Submitting Your Hours

Thanks to everyone who volunteered during our 2023 season! Please submit your hours to: [lorenz\\_sollman@fws.gov](mailto:lorenz_sollman@fws.gov) by the end of the year. Let Lorenz know if you have any questions.

Including your 2023 hours, many of you have reached an hours “milestone” (or two) and thus have earned a pin! We anticipate hosting the traditional volunteer appreciation event some time in the spring, where the Refuge will award hours pins, and also recognize the Volunteer of the Year and those with the top five hours totals. We also hope to hand out the annual bird or mammal “bling” pins that are the pride of every volunteer and the reason we come to work!

## The Friends Board is Recruiting New Board Members

The Friends Board has lost several members in the past couple of years, due to relocation or other pressing commitments. We are seeking volunteers who are interested in this fascinating opportunity to hear what's going on at the Refuge level and to partner with the Refuge in achieving its mission. The coming year will be unique as we welcome the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe as the new managers and hear about their plans for the Refuge.

The Board meets eight times per year, although that may be reduced to every three months until the Tribe's management becomes official. We meet the second Thursday of the month, January–May and September–November via Zoom, from 2:30–4:30 pm. The Board has its officers in place (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary), so we need additional engaged members to discuss Refuge issues and vote on funding for these efforts.

If you are interested in being considered for the Board, or have any questions, please contact the president, Ellie Ausmus, at: [fodnwr@gmail.com](mailto:fodnwr@gmail.com)

The process for vetting prospective members involves submitting a written statement describing your interest in joining the Board, and your experience with the Refuge or in other pertinent areas, e.g. fundraising, education, and public outreach. You would then meet in person with two or more Board members so we can get to know each other. You would also be invited to dial in to a Board meeting to see how they are run.

## CONTACTS

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## FRIENDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

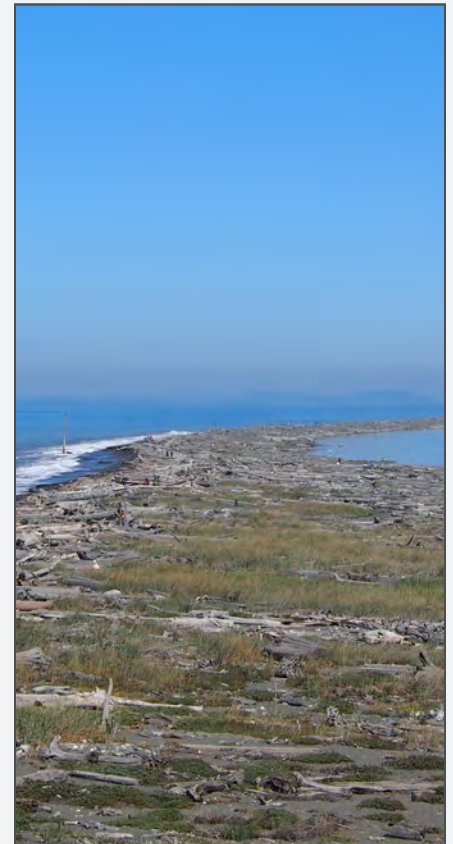
**Ellie Ausmus**, President

**Bruce Brod**, Treasurer

**Jessie Christiansen**, Vice Pres.

**Linda Gutowski**, Secretary

**Jason West**



# Dave Falzetti Retires

Congratulations to Dave on his retirement! The volunteers will certainly miss the best volunteer coordinator we've ever known. Here's his departing message:

Hello Refuge Volunteers, I hope this message finds you both healthy and happy.

I wanted to let you know that after nearly twenty four extremely satisfying years working for Uncle Sam, I have decided to retire from Federal service. My last day will be Monday, 7/31. It has truly been an honor to work with you, the dedicated Volunteers of the National Wildlife Refuge System. You have enriched my life beyond comprehension. I encourage you to carry on with the very important work you so selflessly perform and hope that my departure will not dissuade your efforts in any way. You folks are the life blood of the Refuge System and are critically important to the wildlife it serves to protect. In fact, I would love nothing more than to join your humble ranks as a retiree and in furtherance of that ambition, I have already completed the required new Volunteer training course.

Allow me to reflect for a moment, after all you only get one chance to send a message such as this. My incredible career has led me from the foggy shores of San Francisco Bay to the lush forests of Northern California to the spectacular grandeur of the Olympic Peninsula. I've been blessed to have served throughout the Country on campaigns including oil spills, wildland fires, several endangered species anti-smuggling operations, numerous wild horse roundups, various security details including protecting the Governor and the Secretary of the Interior, and a great many other exciting operations. Not too shabby. I also had a previous career as a U.S. Merchant Mariner serving globally from the Arctic to Antarctica, including in the Persian Gulf during the war. I've truly had a fascinating life.

I'm particularly grateful for the many years I've spent working with Volunteers who bring with them a lifetime of experience and wisdom. In fact, working with Volunteers has been a consistent theme throughout my many years in the workforce. In Wisconsin, where I helped build a 137' sailing school ship, the workforce was 95% Volunteers. All the many tall ships I sailed on were crewed mostly by Volunteers. I actually started on the State of Pennsylvania's U.S. Brig NIAGARA as a Volunteer myself, one of 30 serving along with 15 professionals, which later lead to employment as a ship's officer. And all my Federal jobs with both the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have included working with and/or managing Volunteers. Their positive influence on me personally is immeasurable. Volunteers simply make the world a better place, and a whole heck of a lot more fun.

I look forward to seeing you all again and to the next of life's adventures, whatever it may be. Thank you all for all you do for the Refuge System and for the wildlife that so depend on it. Cheers, Dave



Dave throughout his many years of service with USFWS.



# Native Plants Burn in Brush Fire at Refuge Complex Headquarters

It was an especially dry summer and the fire danger was high. In late June, a resident adjacent to the Refuge is believed to have accidentally started a grass fire while mowing their property. The flames quickly spread to US Fish & Wildlife property. Clallam County Fire Department arrived and extinguished it, but not before damage was done to the prairie restoration project.

About one third to half of the prairie was burned, including slight scorching to a few of the native Garry oak trees (*Quercus garryana*, aka Oregon white oak). Within a few weeks, one oak had re-sprouted at the base. Although the deer fence burned and foraging began immediately, volunteers quickly put up a replacement fence. The impacts to this native-prairie project are not immediately known. Although there was concern of losing the golden paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*) seed source for the year, a second wave of paintbrush flowers followed whose seed may have matured in time to contribute to this valuable restoration seed bank.



CCFD work quickly to limit the damage.  
Photo: G.Tarleton/USFWS

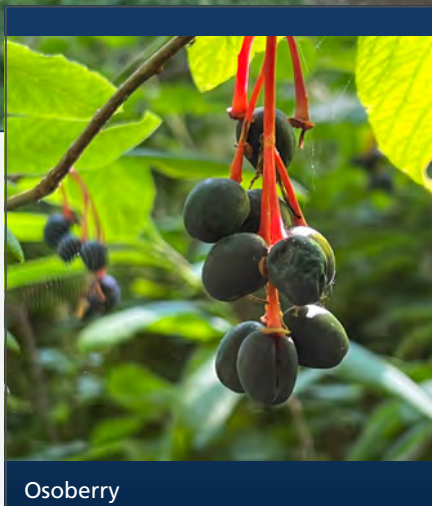


Native plants burn in the restoration prairie. Photo: G.Tarleton/USFWS



Volunteers replace the fence. Photo: Laura Davis





Osoberry

At top: Oceanspray flowers and osoberry (aka Indian plum) fruits under red alder trees along the Refuge primitive trail.

birds, like cedar waxwing, feast and scatter the seeds.

- Also known as Indian plum, fruits look like small 3/8th-inch long Italian plums; the peach-colored fruits ripen to bluish-black, with a single large pit.
- Fruits are edible when ripe and fresh, but bitter.
- More open form growing in shade than in sun.

## Flowering Deciduous Shrubs in the Midsummer Forest

Text and photos by Laura Davis

Flower and fruit clusters meet the eye along the Refuge primitive trail. Although growing more compactly in full sun, these shrubs arch overhead under the limited light of the forest canopy. Their leaves and branches shelter and nurture shrub and tree seedlings, small herbaceous plants, groundcovers, insects and animal inhabitants.

Presented here in order of flower and fruiting, are osoberry, red elderberry and oceanspray, with oceanspray still in flower in early July.

### Osoberry (*Oemleria cerasiformis*)

- The early flowers blossom as the leaves develop, typically in late February.
- Leaf out before the red alders (*Alnus rubra*) who, later, filter the midsummer sun.
- Both male and female plants are needed to produce fruits.

Plants spread as mammals and



**Red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)**

- Pyramidal clusters of white to cream flowers.
- Vase-like form, with soft, pithy twigs. 5–7 lance-shaped opposite leaflets. Along the trail in early July, I see leaflets at the larger end of the 5–15 cm range.
- Grow mostly in moist to rather wet conditions, though also tolerate full sun or the dry shade under conifers.
- Though berry-like, the bright red fruits are drupes; each has 3–5 small seeds.
- Excellent wildlife shrubs. Flowers provide nectar for butterflies and hummingbirds in April and May. Plant parts contain cyanide and are mildly toxic to poisonous. Their fruits are consumed by many bird species including thrushes, robins, doves, Stellar jays, and crows, but are only edible to humans when cooked. Other mammals do eat the fruits and may browse the foliage and other plant parts, with palatability increasing after frost.

**Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*)**

- Pendulous lilac-like clusters of creamy white flowers.
- Flower clusters turn buff in color and hang after winter rain like wet rags.
- Songbirds shelter and enjoy the bounty of insects and persistent seeds through winter. Bushtits build their distinctive hanging nests here.
- Frequently seen in mixed plant communities along our Pacific Northwest coastal bluffs. Their range includes moist to dry sites.
- Oceanspray also look at home surrounded by snowberry and Nootka rose, or by grasses in sunny, windy and dry conditions. In the adjacent county park, they are stunning whether heavy with fresh flowers and growing as dense clumps, or one after another trailside.
- I find these shrubs establish from young starts more easily than other natives with less tolerance for the dry environment.

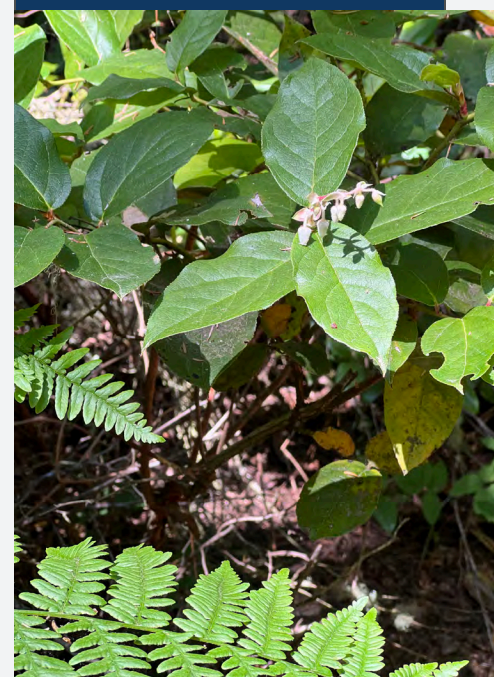


Red elderberry



Oceanspray flowers in bud.

Below: A wild-turkey feather adorns an evergreen sword fern leaf in the upper Dawley-property forest. Below right and far right; a deciduous bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*) co-mingles with a salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) under the dry dappled shade of Douglas firs on the Refuge primitive trail.





# Lancetfishes

By Michael Barton

Pretty much the opposite animal experience from wrestling your puppy on the living-room floor is encountering a longnose lancetfish (*Alepisaurus ferox*, family Alepisauridae) on Pacific Northwest beaches, often in a state of advanced fragrance from having lay in the sun until you come across it. Not exactly a warm and fuzzy encounter. Though primarily distributed in deep tropical and sub-tropical waters, they have frequently been reported on beaches of the northeastern shores of the Pacific Ocean (such a bizarre looking creature, you've got to tell somebody).

Sport and commercial fishers have also hooked or netted them. With such a sleek profile, one might assume that the lancetfish has the speed to match those ferocious teeth. But such a svelte profile belies a rather flabby countenance consistent with a leisurely lifestyle. It is an “ambush” predator that lurks in the gloaming depths of the ocean, snapping at any prey item that stumbles upon it. With cruise control permanently engaged, the pronounced dorsal fin might serve as a rudder to help negotiate tight turns when prey is encountered. Analysis of lancetfish gut contents reveals an assortment of creatures, including young lancetfishes, in a remarkably well-preserved state suggesting that their metabolic demands can be met by occasionally stocking up and leisurely digesting over a prolonged period – much like the feeding strategy of snakes. The fact that plastic debris is also found in their guts demonstrates the insidious pervasiveness of plastics throughout the marine food web (11 Strange but True Facts About Lancetfish, NOAA).

Lancetfish range in depth from the lower reaches of the epipelagic zone around 200 meters down to the lower mesopelagic at depths of around 1000 meters. They, like many predatory fishes living in this realm of increasingly vanishing light, possess especially large and well-developed eyes, unlike the miniscule eyes seen in fishes of the bathypelagic zone where the only light seen is that produced by bioluminescence. Why they are occasionally found on beaches of the Strait of Juan de Fuca is likely because they are able to forage in the deepest parts of the Strait. Just like us, they come for the rockfish, ling, and halibut. Other deep-ocean species more often associated with the offshore realm, such as the hagfish (*Eptatretus stoutii*) and 6-gill shark (*Hexanchus griseus*) have been found here as well (Pietsch et al., 2019). Whether discarded as bycatch or meeting an untimely end by other means, lancetfish continue to wash up on our shores engendering fascination or revulsion depending upon your animal enthusiasms.

## SOURCES

NOAA - 11 Strange but True Facts About Lancetfish.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/11-strange-true-facts-about-lancetfish>

Pietsch, T.W., J.W. Or, and J.R. Tomelleri. 2019. Fishes of The Salish Sea: Puget Sound and The Straits Of Georgia And Juan De Fuca. Univ. Wash. Press.



Lancetfish Photo: Courtesy NOAA Fisheries



DungenessNWR Lancetfish near McDonald Creek, July 2023 Mike Barton



# End of Season Glimpse into the Invasive European Green Crab Project

by Laura Davis

We are grateful to have had Sarah-Kate Rines as Field Crew Leader for the European Green Crab team at the Refuge this year. As a Student Conservation Association and Dungeness Wildlife Refuge employee dedicated to this invasive-species project, she was available each day that the tides made trapping practical and used an adaptive approach: integrating larger “shrimp” traps and setting traps in lucrative habitats in the base lagoon and eelgrass channels, aka “prospecting.” These strategies paid off and we caught 105 crabs for the season – more than ever. The data also show a higher number of crabs found per trap set. Trapping in the base lagoon removed crabs that likely would not have been captured at the



Kathy Taylor and Sarah-Kate venture out to the eelgrass beds.



Doug Marcoux and Sarah-Kate check a line of traps in the base lagoon. The spit entry is below the trees behind Sarah-Kate.



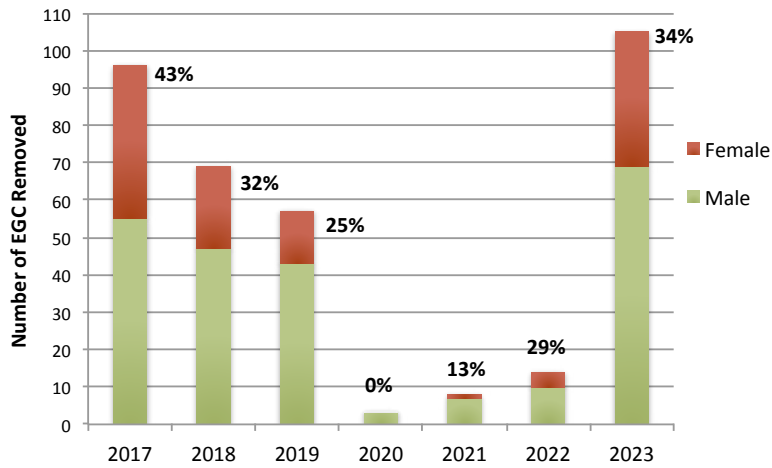
Left and below: In the middle of an eelgrass bed, Sarah-Kate inspects a shrimp trap at low tide to find four EGC.



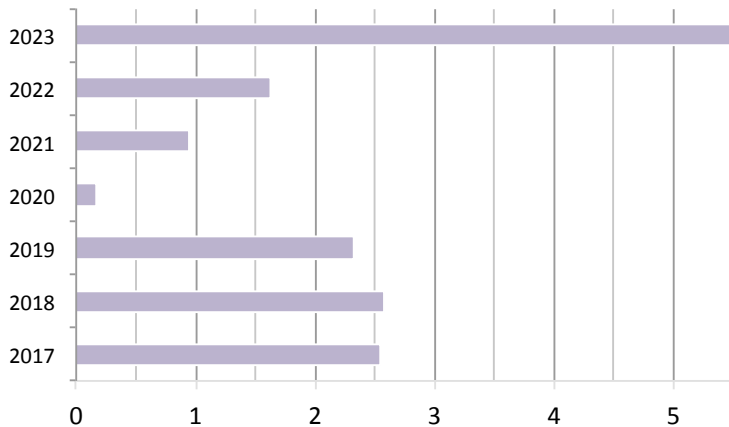
EGC removed from the Dungeness NWR			
Year	EGC Caught, Total	Total Traps Set	EGC Caught per 100 Traps
2017	96	3,762	2.55
2018	69	2,679	2.58
2019	57	2,444	2.33
2020	3	1,883	0.16
2021	8	839	0.95
2022	14	860	1.63
<b>2023</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1,904</b>	<b>5.51</b>
<b>TOTAL, 2017–23</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>14,371</b>	<b>2.45</b>



### European Green Crab Removed from the Dungeness NWR, 2017–2023 EGC Totals, and Percent Female



### Catch per Unit Effort from the DNWR – EGC Removed per 100 Traps Set, 2017–2023



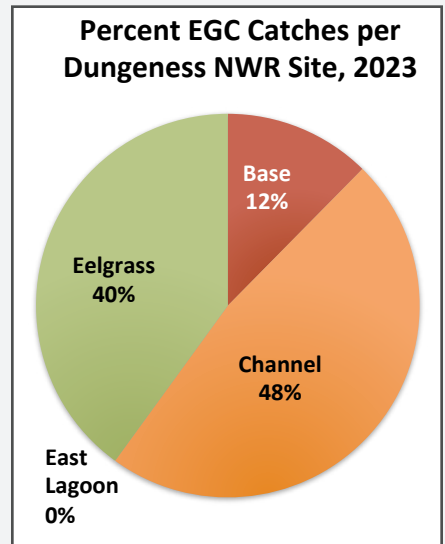
Photos, and charts from S.K. Rines' preliminary data.: Laura Davis



channel over 400 feet away. The two gravid females we caught were in the eelgrass channel at Graveyard Spit.

**Bar charts, left:** This season the team removed more EGC than any previous year. This year also showed the highest number caught per number of traps set; the “Catch Per Unit Effort” (CPU) this year was 5.5 crabs per 100 traps set compared to a CPU of 2.6 in the first two years of the invasion.

**Pie chart:** The extended areas of trapping led to more captures; 40% of the season's total were taken from the eelgrass beds where Dungeness Bay funnels in toward the Graveyard Spit pickleweed channel. Of the EGC trapped at the base (12%), one-third were taken from the lagoon site.



Below left: Access is limited by tides, so September 28 was the last day of the trapping season. The team carried the various types of traps out to the beach and secured into the vehicle and trailer. From left: Michael Shanks, Pat Schoen, Carol Jacobs, Joanne LaBaw, and Sarah-Kate Rines.

Below right: we removed marine vegetation, inspected for repairs, and washed saltwater from gear for winter storage.





## Sailboat on The Spit

For the second time this year a sailboat has been removed from Dungeness Spit after washing ashore. This vessel washed ashore in mid-July, one-quarter mile west of the light station. The Coast Guard believes it broke free while being towed. USFWS worked with Washington Department of Natural Resources for removal.



Dave contemplates whether restoring this abandoned sailboat would be a good retirement project.  
Photo: Gary Tarleton/USFWS



# Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Wild Populations – It's Out There!

by Laura Davis

Early in autumn many of us are watching in anticipation of the seasonal influx of migrating birds across the Sequim-Dungeness area. In the far north, the summer nesting season is short; as nights cool and conditions dictate, migrating birds follow the resource and temperature gradients, water and food, south.

Many migrating birds navigate via landmarks like the Dungeness Spit. Some, like the Trumpeter Swan overwinter here; we live at the south edge of their Pacific Coast Population range. But some, like Tundra Swan, are primarily passers-through; they continue further along the Pacific Flyway toward California.

In the “Brant” Winter 2020 issue I wrote of the Trumpeter Swans using a small irrigation pond adjacent to Woodcock and Kirner roads for roosting at night. Over the course of several seasons, nine swan mortalities had occurred due to powerline strikes as the birds flew from the pond each dawn, included a swan electrocution December 9, 2019. Many people, non-profits and the utility companies came together to fund the work to re-route the essential utilities underground for a short distance, and permanently remove the thin but dangerous obstacles on the west-bound flight path from this important habitat. When we solve a problem with huge efforts, we certainly like to think, whew, that's it – no more challenges like that – please!

This past autumn, November 2022, we had a larger number of both swan species pass through the area and more using Kirner Pond than ever before documented by Audubon volunteers. Sudden arrival of cold temperatures in Alaska and western Canada had forced a larger number of migrating waterfowl south at a time of highest competition for food and habitat. Drought along the Pacific Flyway meant limited water on the landscape. Geese and swans, who already roost in close concentrations, packed into even denser assemblages on ponds and wetlands. We felt so immensely grateful that the hazardous lines had been removed from the large birds' daily dawn flight path at the Kirner Pond roosting site, however, shivers still run down my spine every time I think of it; are we tired of hearing the term “influenza”?



Swans and smaller waterfowl on Kirner Pond at first light. Photo: Bob Phreaner  
Top: Canada geese take off over Kirner Road at dawn. Photo: John Gussman

As avian influenza quickly spread within Washington in May 2022, Refuge biologist Sue Thomas shared information and reporting methods to all Refuge staff and volunteers.

See reporting guideline updates and resource links at the end of this article.



The congested context of a small pond is ripe territory for infection and disease. Avian influenza (AI) viruses spread through saliva, nasal secretions, feces, and contaminated surfaces and can live outside a host in cold water for up to several weeks. Within a couple weeks of the swans' arrival in 2022 we lost two swans to the virulent type called highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) at Kirner Pond (Nov 15 and 19): an immature Tundra and an adult Trumpeter Swan. For eight days in mid-November between 150 and 200 swans roosted on this small pond. After numbers peaked on November 22, we breathed a huge sigh of relief when many swans dispersed from our area, and specifically, Kirner Pond. Some Trumpeters likely continued to other winter grounds – to less congested roosting ponds in Jefferson County or points further south.

Here in Clallam County, diagnosis testing of resident swans last season was limited to just these two. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) was aware of only three probable swan mortalities due to HPAI in Clallam and Jefferson counties last season. The third swan was found on December 7 just west of the Dungeness Spit entry point. It showed evidence of predation by eagles, but could not be tested. Swans are primarily seen near the Refuge only as flyovers or when they stage on Dungeness Bay during migration.

In the winter 2022–2023 season, in spite of our early season concerns, swans and geese alike got off easy here in comparison to areas east of the Salish Sea, where hundreds to thousands of geese and dozens of swans died, all detected in concentrated night roosts. Imagine tens of thousands of geese packed onto a small water body. While ducks do not normally concentrate to the same degree as geese

American and Eurasian Widgeon on Dungeness Bay near Three Crabs. In South Carolina, January 2022, an American widgeon was the first known case of H5N1 in North America since 2016. Photo: Bob Boekelheide



## Geographic Spread of H5N1 HPAI

Kyle Spragens, WDFW's Wildfowl Section Manager, worked for USGS back when HPAI exploded in China in 2008. Tracking in several counties showed that the movement of wild waterfowl and avian influenza were not synced. Although there was a strong concern about the highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1) coming to the United States and Canada, surveillance finally narrowed attention to virus coming in via Alaska from China, or in the Atlantic Flyway from Europe. In December 2014, two H5 subtypes were discovered in Whatcom County. One strain headed down and infected some backyard poultry in the Pacific Flyway; the other spread to the mid-continent and caused a massive outbreak down the Mississippi Flyway in the spring of 2015.

Both fizzled out until 2020–2021 in Europe. Mortality from H5N1 hit mute swans and other waterfowl. It was then tracked to Nova Scotia in December 2021, where it continued south along the Atlantic Flyway. As wild birds started heading north again in the spring, HPAI spread rapidly from east to west to Washington State, in March 2022. HPAI had not been detected at all in wild birds in the Pacific Flyway since 2015.



and swans, this context does make the other wild aquatic birds vulnerable – including various ducks, gulls, terns, and shorebirds. Risks of HPAI transmission are greatest wherever infected wildlife are present.

With this disease outbreak so clearly seen in waterfowl throughout the state, limited funds and testing resources had to be directed away from waterfowl and toward where the virus was previously undetected, or in species of conservation concern like less-abundant birds of prey species. Testing was capped at two individuals per new species per county. In Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties, geese and swans were double bagged and disposed in landfills with neither necropsy nor testing. Although publicly available databases have tracked positive cases (see [Resources](#) below), the postings were limited to tested animals; the numbers do **not** reflect the full extent or spread of the disease.

According to WDFW Wildlife Veteranian, Katie Hamam, testing resources remain limited. Unless a threatened, endangered or otherwise protected species, testing will focus on animals with clinical signs in locations HPAI has not been confirmed this season.

Although some Audubon and Refuge volunteers may report possible wildlife injury, illness, or mortality to state or federal staff, guidelines have changed for all, including staff and local veterinarians. For reasons including limited funding, human safety, and confinement of disease spread, it is probable that no injured or dead animals will be transported across county lines or studied for cause of death this winter.

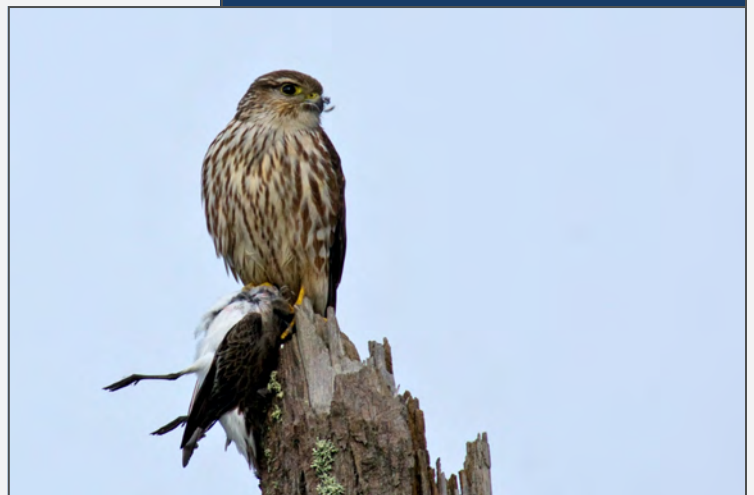
The list of species affected by HPAI globally is ever growing. Scavenging birds or mammals, such as eagles, bears and vultures, are easily the most vulnerable for exposure to a high concentration of virus. Here in western Washington, detection in mammals has included raccoons, skunk and harbor seals. Just this summer near Port Townsend, AI deaths were confirmed in Caspian Terns and harbor seals. The increased detection of the strain of HPAI H5N1 in land and sea mammals is of additional concern; each evolving virus strain may be more harmful to humans. Thus far, human cases are very rare, having occurred



A bald eagle took this merganser on the Dungeness Bay mudflats, then up onto a bluff limb to feed. Clallam County had its first two bald eagles testing positive on 9/13/2022.



A Cooper's hawk on a feeder bird, a Eurasian-collared dove. Skagit County had a confirmed Cooper's hawk case last December.



A merlin perched on a snag with its Dungeness Bay shorebird prey. Photos this page: Dow Lambert



only in two individuals with prolonged contact and high levels of exposure to the pathogens in poultry processing facilities. Unlike the coronavirus, there is no aerosol delivery. Although the epidemiology of HPAI H5N1 continues to rapidly evolve, the CDC reports that overall risk to human health remains low (CDC update, October 5, 2023).

The seasonal pattern of HPAI for our north-breeding migrants has shown the occurrence infection rates at their lowest in September, increasing in October, and peaking in February. Still, most AI viruses are low pathogenic (LPAI), which will exhibit few signs of disease in infected wild birds. Chickens and other domesticated poultry infected with LPAI may exhibit mild disease. However some LPAI viruses can mutate into the HPAI viruses and cause severe disease. Mortality of up to 90% or 100% in chickens is often seen within 48 hours. HPAI infections in poultry can spill back into wild migrating birds, and result in further geographic spread of the virus.

According to WDFW's Kyle Spragens, it is a common misunderstanding that the HPAI virus disappears from our area with the spring migration of wild aquatic populations, and that migrating wild birds that would bring it back in the fall. The virus does remain in resident populations during summer months after wild migrants head north. And although HPAI would be expected to peter out up north during breeding season in the affected wild populations, there was clearly a regional surge of cases last fall. This summer, we have seen the first known instance of HPAI in wild birds in Washington state during the breeding season, with 80% of the breeding Caspian Tern population in Port Townsend Bay succumbing to the virus.

Although migrations can spread avian influenza across the continent, a combination of other factors, including drought and cold temperatures were at play last



A Peregrine Falcon on the Dungeness Spit. There are several Puget Sound counties with confirmed cases of H5N1 in Peregrine Falcons. That has not been seen yet in Clallam County.

winter and might have contributed to levels of morbidity and mortality. While we personally experienced the unusual weather in our area last fall, weather anomalies also reach up and down the Pacific Flyway.

We do not know what this coming cool season will bring. When the immature, wild birds who have never before experienced the virus come south during fall migration, how many young birds will die with their first exposure to the virus?

Two species of tern forage on the Dungeness Spit amongst gulls: Caspian Tern behind the fairly rare Elegant Tern. Photos: Dow Lambert







A Peregrine Falcon dives into a flock of shorebirds on Dungeness Bay near Graveyard Spit. Photo: Dow Lambert

## Recommended Resources

You can find avian influenza updates and research on WDFW, USGS, USDA, CDC and WHO websites, (search keywords: avian influenza or HPAI). Please be aware that due to extremely limited testing, databases will not include all cases.

### **National Wildlife Disease Program of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) HPAI Detections in Wild Birds, Mammals And Poultry – by location and species**

(Follow the links to more information for wild birds, mammals, or poultry)

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/2022-hpai>

### **Wild Bird Avian Influenza Surveillance, USDA APHIS (mapping from wild-bird sampling)**

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/animal-health/wild-bird-avian-flu-surveillance>

### **CDC Technical Report: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A(H5N1) Viruses (updated Oct. 5, 2023)**

[https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/spotlights/2022-2023/h5n1-technical-report\\_september.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/spotlights/2022-2023/h5n1-technical-report_september.htm)



**DO NOT TOUCH** or move any birds or animals – dead or alive. Prompt reporting will help inform appropriate and timely follow-up so that infected animals can be removed to prevent disease spread, including via predation. Looking from a distance protects ourselves and lessens stress to the animal.

To date, we have had no wildlife testing positive for HPAI in the Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Since Spring 2022, Wildlife Biologist Sue Thomas has regularly monitored for infected wildlife according to the season: at Dungeness NWR during the non-breeding cool season, and at Protection Island NWR during the breeding season. At Protection Island this summer, one Olympic Gull chick tested positive for low-pathogenic avian flu.

Sue visited Smith Island in the San Juan Islands NWR several times this season, which includes breeding grounds suitable for Caspian Tern. Although near the Rat Island outbreak, there has been no evidence of HPAI on Smith. Some species are showing more vulnerability to HPAI infection than others. While the Caspian terns nesting near Port Townsend on Rat Island were hit hard this past summer, the Western x Glaucous-winged Gulls (aka Olympic Gulls) breeding in the same, mixed colony, saw very little infection in the same habitat.

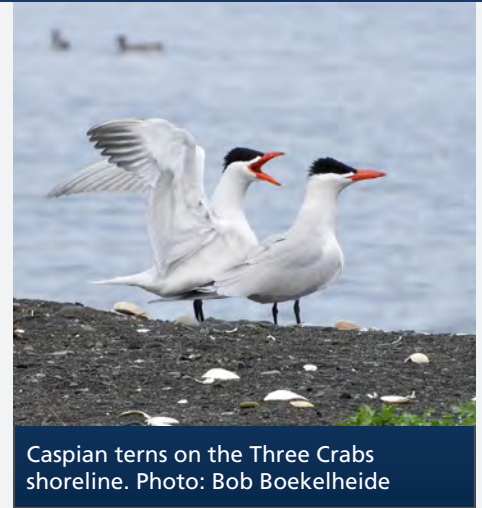
## How to Report Sick or Dead Wildlife ON THE REFUGE:

On Refuge-managed lands and waters, contact the office at 360-457-8451 as soon as possible with the location, symptoms, and type of animal you suspect to be infected. If you did not make the sighting yourself, a visitor may call in this detailed report.

- Location of the sighting – e.g. the direction and approximate distance from the base of the spit.
- Date and time of observation
- Number and species (if possible)

- Condition: dead, dying, injured or behaving in an erratic or abnormal manner.
- If alive, cause for concern: Disoriented or walking in circles, jerky head movements, dropping or twisted head, little response to close approach by humans?
- If leaving a message, please leave your phone number in case follow-up is necessary.

Updated guidelines and resource links will be posted to the FODWR website as needed.



Caspian terns on the Three Crabs shoreline. Photo: Bob Boekelheide

## How to Report Sightings OUTSIDE THE REFUGE:

As area residents, there are things we can do to prevent the spread of avian influenza in wild birds, protect ourselves and others. Off Refuge lands, please report sick or dead wildlife suspected of having avian influenza promptly and directly to WDFW.

- By phone: WDFW Wildlife Biologist Shelly Ament (360) 477-0123, or WDFW Conflict Technician Nickoli Kallman at (360) 810-0186 (Clallam and Jefferson counties). Provide the bulleted information shown at left, plus possible signs of animal predation.
- Or, report via online form: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bird-flu>

Discourage people and their pets from interacting with or scavenging dead wildlife.

Consider biosecurity measures to limit virus spread, e.g. not feeding waterfowl, which can cause birds to congregate in large numbers. (Bird species coming to feeders are unlikely to spread avian influenza but can transmit other infectious diseases.)

*For their contributions to this article, thanks to:*

*Kyle Spragens, WDFW; Sue Thomas, USFWS; Katie Hamam, WDFW; Shelly Ament, WDFW; and Liam Antrim, OPAS.*





High hours awards. From left: Ron Andris (4,500 hrs), Tom McKinney (1,000 hrs), Birgitt Llewellyn (1,000 hrs), John Jones (750 hrs), Laura Davis (750 hrs), Ellie Ausmus (750 hrs), Sue Bonomo (500 hrs), and Jason West (500 hrs). Photo: Gary Tarleton/USFWS



Volunteer of the Year award recipients. From left: Tom McKinney (2019), Jessie Christiansen (2018), Pat Schoen (2013), Janet Bruening (2010–2019), Laura Davis (2022), Ellie Ausmus (2021), Ron Andris (2016), and Jason West (2020). Photo: Gary Tarleton/USFWS





Volunteers in conversation.

Slideshow viewing.



Ellie presents Dave with the "buoy award" for being an outstanding Volunteer Coordinator.