



2017 WINTER BULLETIN

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Island Girl Completes Her Eighth Round Trip Migration

Island Girl, our satellite-tagged adult female peregrine, completed her eighth round trip migration from Baffin Island to the coast of south central Chile on 27 November 2016. And how improbable is this? After functioning perfectly for the last eight years (an apparent world record for a tagged peregrine), Island Girl's satellite transmitter finally stopped working just as she arrived back home in Chile. Her beeps stopped on 27 November but we got one last Doppler ping on 23 December. Although this transmitter could have failed at any time during all of those years (approximately 2900 days), it failed right at the perfect time, allowing us to know that she had returned home safely, a remarkable, unexpected and reassuring coincidence.

Results from the FRG 2016 Australia Tour

The FRG tour to Australia last October was a great success and a tremendously fun excursion. Lead by **Bill Clark** and **Sergio Siepke** from **Raptours**, our group of 11 (**Rand and Dana Jack, Sue Cottrell, Andrea Warner, Kanit Cottrell, Mike Walker, Wendy Walker, Becky Rosencrans, Steve Harper, and Peggy Parker**) traveled for three weeks across New South Wales, Queensland and finally Darwin. We had great looks at most of the 24 raptor species (no Grey Falcon) and many other extraordinary birds, especially the incredibly wide variety of parrots. Love those Red-tailed Black Cockatoos! Thanks to Bill and Sergio for a trip of a lifetime. BTW peregrines nest at Uluru (Ayers Rock).

Sergio Seipke Raptor Presentation Series (Don't miss them!)

Noted raptor authority Sergio Seipke will be visiting WA this month and we have arranged a series of free talks describing his extensive experience with raptors worldwide. Don't miss them as he is one of the leading hawk ID guys on the planet.

1. **SEATTLE** (Friday March 17, 7PM)
Hawkwatching Around the World: Raptor Highlights from Six Continents
Greenwood Senior Center, 525 No. 85th, Seattle, WA. (Seattle Audubon, FRG)
2. **MT. VERNON** (Saturday March 18, 1 PM)
Raptors of South Africa
Padilla Bay Center (FRG)
NOTE: *Primarily for those interested in the upcoming South Africa Raptor Tour.*
3. **BELLINGHAM** (Saturday March 18, 7PM)
Hawkwatching Around the World: Raptor Highlights of Six Continents.
Bellingham Public Library.

Sponsored by the library, Whatcom Land Trust and North Cascades Audubon)

FRG South Africa Raptor Tour 2018

Because the Australia trip was so wonderful, we have decided to do another FRG raptor tour with Sergio, this time to South Africa. SA is famous for its large number and variety of birds of prey, including vultures, eagles, hawks and falcons. In addition, we will be seeing the classic African mammals, including wild elephants, giraffes, cheetahs, and hippos before it is too late. Sergio has guided this trip in the past and knows all the right places to go and where to stay. He also works with local raptor guides. We are looking at January 2018 for this two week trip with possible extensions to Madagascar, the Seychelles and Mauritius. If you have an interest in going, please contact Bud for more information.

There will be a special presentation, open to all, at the Padilla Bay Center Saturday March 18th at 1 PM (see above) for those interested in learning more about this tour.

Seattle Merlins

Ben Vang-Johnson and Kim McCormick are continuing their important study of local Merlins and have been kind enough to allow me to share their results. Last summer, they located a remarkable 20 pairs of Merlins breeding in the greater Seattle area! Fifteen of these produced at least 45 young, an average of 3.0 per pair. This is a remarkable, but typical, increase since Merlins were first reported nesting in the area in 2008. This southward expansion first started in Bellingham back in 2000. Ben and Kim are putting either red or blue leg bands on their study falcons. If you see one, please try to read the band and then contact them at byjohnson87@gmail.com or

Kim.McCormick@comcast.net. They also welcome volunteers on this project. I completely envy these two. Sign up for a fascinating project!

Seattle Peregrines

Ed Deal reports there are still five active nests in Seattle. Last summer, they produced 19 young peregrines and Ed banded 14. Among those banded, five (26%) died before or after fledging. Two were euthanized due to wing fractures, one drowned, one was run over by a bus, and the last was found dead with the cause unreported. Cities are hard on peregrines.

Sea-Tac Airport Results 2016

In 2016, we caught another **87** raptors (73 hawks and falcons and 13 owls) and moved them to the Skagit Flats, well away from the runways. The Sea-Tac total over 16 years is **828 raptors**. We had a record high number of 8 Barred Owls which seem to be increasing around the airport. We also experienced very low numbers of Red-tails (22). In an attempt to learn where the re-located birds go, we have now wing-tagged a total of **272 Red-tailed Hawks**, 49 adults (2001-2016) and 223 juveniles (2009-2016). Only 12 (5%) of the juveniles have returned to the airport, demonstrating that re-location is a viable alternative to shooting. SEA birds have been reported from Naniamo, Vancouver, Aldergrove, Surry and Victoria in BC, Eugene and the Deschutes River in Oregon and Maxwell, California. All of these birds have remained within the Pacific flyway.

Seattle Cooper's Hawk Study

Ed Deal and Martin Muller are continuing to study the urban Cooper's Hawks of Seattle. Last summer, they located a **RECORD 41 nesting pairs** inside the city limits. Thirty-five (85%) of these were successful and produced 125 young. Over the last five years, they have color-banded 184 Cooper's Hawks in town. Sixty-five of the color-marked hawks have been reported, a very high 35.3% re-sighting rate. Color bands obviously work. If you see one of their birds, please let them know (206) 723-4742.

Twenty-eighth Annual Skagit Flats Hawk Census

Our annual hawk count was held on **11 February** in 2017. A stalwart group of 96 volunteers established a **new Skagit record of 1,274** birds of prey. We saw 12 species, including **717 Bald Eagles** (56%), **266 Red-tailed Hawks** (21%), **145 Northern**

Harriers (11%) and **63 Rough-legged Hawks** (5%). Also counted were **35** American Kestrels (**new record**), **6** Merlins, **12** peregrines, **1** Sharp-shin, **11** Cooper's Hawks, **2** Golden Eagles (**another record**) and **13** Short-eared Owls. As usual, 94% of the hawks were the "Big Four" species.

Ed Deal Cooper's Hawk Presentation

Ed presented a talk describing his work (with Martin Muller) on Cooper's Hawks at the annual census. Needless to say, it was one of our best presentations. He will be presenting this talk again at the monthly Washington Ornithologists Society (WOS) meeting in Seattle at the Center for Urban Horticulture on Monday, 3 April at 7 PM. These guys are a superb and dedicated pair of local raptor biologists and the talk is both informative and humorous. Don't miss this one either.

Annual Dues

If you like what we are doing, please help with the efforts. Dues are traditionally just \$25.00. If you want to send more, we appreciate it. Thank you for your support.