



*Education,  
Research,  
Stewardship*

# Beach Log

NOVEMBER 2006



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
ISLAND COUNTY EXTENSION

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## 2006 Pigeon Guillemot Study

During 2006 Whidbey Audubon's Pigeon Guillemot Study made several significant strides forward. As in past years volunteers visited breeding colonies in bluffs around Whidbey Island. Every two weeks between May and late August the volunteers sat quietly for 30 minutes, counted guillemots and recorded their behavior. This year 30 volunteers monitored 23 colonies and observed approximately 1,000 birds.

In the past it has been difficult to observe the juvenile birds once they have fledged. The birds leave their burrows at night and swim to feeding areas. This year Merv and Kathy Floyd offered their boat and, along with a \$500 grant from Washington Audubon to pay for gas, we were able to count juveniles offshore. We made six boat trips to different sections of the island where colonies are present and saw approximately 34 juvenile birds.

The Island County Marine Resources Committee contributed \$3,500 to our camera fund enabling us to purchase a high-tech camera, which is mounted on a 50-foot extension pole. This camera allows us to look inside the burrows to determine when eggs are laid and young hatch. Next season we hope to use this camera more extensively.

Thanks goes to all our volunteer data gatherers and especially Merv and Kathy Floyd for use of their boat, Celia Bartram and Craig Johnson for their excellent



*Photo by Craig Johnson*

Adult pigeon guillemot raising wings while sitting on the water..

photography, Phyllis Kind for entering the data, Bill and Arlene Stebbins for adapting and armoring the camera and Kim Bredensteiner for transferring the data to the county Global Imaging System and producing maps.

Would you like to join our team in 2007? Contact Frances Wood, [wood@whidbey.com](mailto:wood@whidbey.com).

*Frances Wood, BW Class of 2001*



## Monitoring Madness

### Invasive Ascidian Found!

A recent weekend RV trip has resulted in the discovery of the invasive ascidian *Didemnum* sp. at Larabee State Park. A couple of months ago, my husband and I bought an RV in anticipation of a trip to Phoenix to visit the grandchildren. We decided to take it on a shakedown trip to the park which is just south of Bellingham in Whatcom County and we reserved a campsite within walking distance of the beach. I was happy to see that the tide would be out to the 0 foot level both mornings of our stay, so I packed my boots to take along.

In spite of some slippery footing, the campground beach proved to be very interesting with a multitude of purple sea stars (*Pisaster ocraceus*) and other intertidal life. As I explored, I began to notice patches of white-tan colonial ascidian on the undersides of boulders, some of which had droopy looking blobs hanging down. Closer inspection showed what looked like white granules in their surface. Coming around a corner, I saw an outcropping of bedrock with a 4 to 5 square-foot area of tan-colored, very drippy-looking encrusting ascidian. By this time, lots of little bells were going off in my head and thanks to Beach Watchers training, I had a good idea of what this was and who to report it to. I also knew not to try to collect a specimen, but instead to get some good photos of it. (See Sammye Kempbell's article in the September 2006 and Jan Holmes' article in the June 2006 editions of the Beach Log).

The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and the Puget Sound Action Team were very interested to hear my report. Jesse Schultz, of DFW Aquatic Nuisance Species Program, drove up from Olympia soon after to confirm that this was indeed the invasive species of *Didemnum* and made plans to remove the ascidian from the rocks during a middle-of-the-night low tide.

I called later with a follow-up inquiry and Pamala Meacham, Assistant Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator, told me that the removal was canceled due to hazardous conditions on the beach and very bad



Photo by Mary o Adams

These photos show the characteristic color and drippy appearance of the invasive ascidian species *Didemnum*

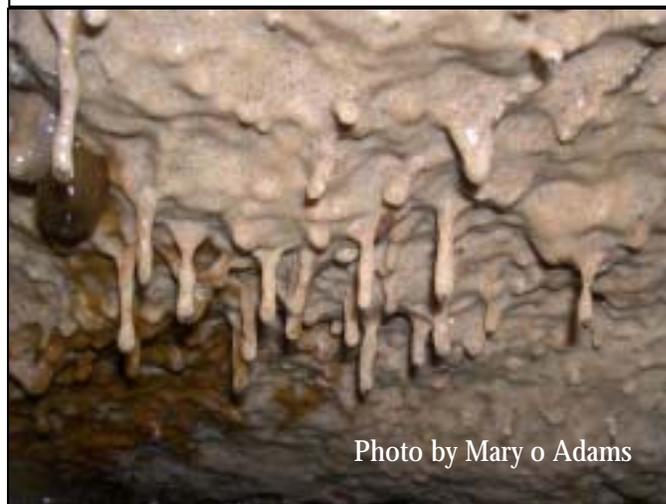


Photo by Mary o Adams

weather that night. They did, however, use propane torches to burn all of it they could find off the rocks. She also told me that the invasive *Didemnum* has been found intertidally in only one other place in Washington, near Shilshole. In addition, Larabee State Park is the furthest north this species has been found in Washington, although there is some a lot further north in British Columbian waters.

She went on to discuss the possibility that environmental changes, including longer-lasting warm spells and nutrification of the waters, make the environment ripe for invasive species and the increasing number of harmful algal blooms (HABs) that have been seen in recent years, noting that the invasive ascidians are fine filter feeders that seem to thrive



under these conditions. She says it is possible that some of these invasive species have been present in low numbers for 50-60 years and environmental factors are suddenly allowing them to proliferate. For many years, people were scientifically unaware of the impact that could be wrought by introducing outside species of organisms and, unintentionally, the hitchhikers that were with them. Additionally, some invasive species may have arrived as fouling on ships and anchor ropes, or with ballast.

BWs are in a unique position to watch for this and other invasive species (such as the European green crab) because we spend a lot of time on the beach and we have been educated to recognize the invaders. Be on the lookout!

Mary Jo Adams, BW Class of 1999



Puget Sound Refi

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Town of Coupeville



## 2006/07 Winter Low Tide Schedule

(These are the predicted lows for Pt. Townsend. Deception Pass low tides are approx 18 minutes earlier. All times listed are in the evening.)

### NOV

Mon 20<sup>th</sup> @ 9:33 pm -1.7 feet  
 Tues 21<sup>st</sup> @ 10:06 -2.1  
 Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 10:42 -2.3

### DEC

Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 8:40 pm -2.2 feet  
 Mon 4<sup>th</sup> @ 9:20 -2.8  
 Tues 5<sup>th</sup> @ 10:02 -2.8  
 Wed 6<sup>th</sup> @ 10:44 -2.5  
 Mon 18<sup>th</sup> @ 8:35 -1.6  
 Tues 19<sup>th</sup> @ 9:10 -2.1  
 Wed 20<sup>th</sup> @ 9:47 -2.4  
 Thurs 21<sup>st</sup> @ 10:27 -2.5  
 Sun 31<sup>st</sup> @ 7:41 -1.6

### JAN

Mon 1<sup>st</sup> @ 8:22 pm -2 feet  
 Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 9:05 -2.2  
 Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 9:46 -2  
 Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> @ 10:27 -1.7  
 Tues 16<sup>th</sup> @ 8:12 -1.5  
 Wed 17<sup>th</sup> @ 8:52 -2  
 Thurs 18<sup>th</sup> @ 9:32 -2.3  
 Fri 19<sup>th</sup> @ 10:13 -2.3  
 Sat 20<sup>th</sup> @ 10:53 -1.9

### FEB

Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> @ 8:31 -1.5 feet  
 Fri 16<sup>th</sup> @ 9:13 -1.5

We have obtained permission from Deception Pass State Park to do nighttime tide pooling at Rosario again this winter. This is a wonderful opportunity to discover some fascinating intertidal species. Keep in mind that Rosario has slippery, treacherous footing under the best of circumstances and this is compounded by darkness. If you have problems with your balance, night vision, or footing while climbing around on uneven rocky surfaces, nighttime tide pooling at Rosario is probably not a good idea for you. Beach Watchers interested in going out on any of the above dates should contact Mary Jo Adams.



## Dates to Remember

### Upcoming Camano Island and Whidbey Island Events and Other Items of Interest



#### Camano Island

**November 14, Tuesday 2006. *FOCIP Leaf Rake.*** Happening at Camano Island State Park. Please sign up, watch for further details, and bring your rake.

**December 4, Monday 2006. *Camano Beach Watcher Monthly Meeting.*** At the Camano Center 9 AM. The speaker is Susan Berta of Orcanet. Her topic will be "Puget Sound Orca Update".

**Friday, December 8, 2006. *Camano Island Beach Watchers Holiday Party.*** Camano Country Club. Mark your calendars, details to follow.

**December 21, Thursday 2006. *Whidbey Beach Watcher Holiday Party.*** Come celebrate the Holiday's with your fellow Beach Watchers and friends with food, drink, and fun auction items!

**January 9, Tuesday 2007. *Beach Watcher Annual Meeting.*** 1 – 3 PM at the Coupeville Rec Hall.

**February 3, Saturday 2007. *Sound Waters; A One-Day "University" For Everyone.*** Mark your calendars!

#### Whidbey Island

**November 16, Thursday 2006. *Whidbey Beach Watcher Monthly Meeting.*** Trinity Lutheran Church, 6:00 volunteer meeting, 7PM presentation by Washington Water Trails Association.

**November 18, Saturday 2006. *Seafood & Marine Toxins.*** Whidbey General Hospital free Community Education Class 10AM – Noon, conference room A. Registration required, call (360) 678-7656 ext. 4005 for more information.

**December 21, Thursday 2006. *Whidbey Beach Watcher Holiday Party.*** Come celebrate the Holiday's with your fellow Beach Watchers and friends with food, drink, and fun auction items!

**January 9, Tuesday 2007. *Beach Watcher Annual Meeting.*** 1 – 3 PM at the Coupeville Rec Hall.

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#### New 4-H Group Forming

4-H is working to form a "Roots and Shoots" club in South or Central Whidbey. Founded by Jane Goodall in Tanzania, the Roots and Shoots Program is designed to engage and inspire youth through service-learning projects. Roots and Shoots groups have sprouted in over 100 countries around the world and explore a diverse array of issues. All Roots and Shoots groups show care and concern in three areas: the human community, animals, and the environment. Existing clubs have worked on projects ranging from raising money for a chimp orphanage to baking dog treats for an animal shelter; from planting trees to starting a compost bin at school; and from making get well cards for people in the hospital to volunteering at a soup kitchen.

We are looking for adults interested in working with this club, either by co-leading the group, sharing a special skill (e.g. bug identification, gardening, art using recycled materials), or designing your own role within the club. Time commitments will vary depending on participation.

For more information on the Roots and Shoots Program, please visit [www.rootsandshoots.org](http://www.rootsandshoots.org) To become involved with this club or to receive more information, contact Amanda Moeser, [amandacm@yahoo.com](mailto:amandacm@yahoo.com) or Judy Feldman at the WSU Extension office, 360-679-7328.



## Alternative Shoreline Stabilization Evaluation Project

My bedtime reading for a week has been the final report of the Alternative Shoreline Stabilization Evaluation Project. Although, it's not on the Best Seller list, it contains thought-provoking and critical information. I don't get a lot of reading done during the day, so I set aside time before going to sleep.

On October 27, geologist Wendy Gerstel offered a Powerpoint presentation on the Alternative Shoreline Stabilization Evaluation Project. Beach Watchers were well-represented at the afternoon session in the Commissioners meeting room (Donna Keeler, Sarah Schmidt, Phyllis Kind and me). Scott Chase, Camano BW coordinator and two Camano Island Beach Watchers participated via a live-feed to the Camano office.

The project was conducted in conjunction with the Puget Sound Action Team. Wendy Gerstel and Jennifer Brown were hired to evaluate alternatives to traditional shoreline armoring practices and applications in Puget Sound. They evaluated 17 sites, addressing the applicability of the project to site concerns, construction logistics, performance of the project, habitat conditions and possible consequences of sea level rise. Their findings indicated that the process of advocating for alternatives to traditional bulkheads would benefit from "more coordinated objectives and guidelines from permitting agencies."

I learned that often a property owner's perceived concern triggers an initial shoreline modification permitting request that leads to over design or possibly unnecessary mitigation. It is not uncommon for the perceived concern to be unsubstantiated by the observed process.

There are many alternatives to shoreline stabilization that can reduce the ecological and economic impacts of traditional bulkheading practices. The report by Brown and Gerstel includes recommendations which encourage community workshops and public outreach education (targeting shoreline property owners) about geology, hydrology and coastal proc-

esses that contribute to the instability of slopes and erosion of shoreline. The report emphasizes the necessity of providing information for landscaping options and promoting the use of native vegetation.

The content of the final report includes an introduction describing site selection, an overview of the sites visited, project methods and evaluation of high- and low-bank stabilization practices, evaluation of sites where bulkheads were removed, a homeowner satisfaction rating and study conclusions. It also includes photos of the 17 sites.

Though not on the on the Top Ten list, I recommend adding a copy of this report to your personal Beach Watchers reference library. You can access the report online at [www.psat.wa.gov](http://www.psat.wa.gov) (and the photos are in color). For more information about the final report, you can e-mail Wendy Gerstel at [mudpeople@earthlink.net](mailto:mudpeople@earthlink.net).

*Roxallanne Medley, BW Class of Spring 2003*

## Great Idea for a Waste-free Gift.

Nationally the American Red Cross is working to make a difference in our communities. In Island County one way to make a difference is to give the gift of a prepaid Adult CPR, Infant & Child CPR or First Aid Class to a friend, family member or a coworker. As of July 1, 2006 our Island County chapter, along with all other American Red Cross chapters, started teaching the new updated material for Adult CPR and Infant & Child CPR. First Aid along with the CPR's is now more video lead with more participation by the students in the learning of the skills.

The process is very simple, print out the Adult CPR or Infant and Child CPR or First Aid Certificate from their website, [www.islandcountyredcross.org](http://www.islandcountyredcross.org). Then call the chapter and ask to speak to the Health and Safety Department. Tell them you have the certificate from the web site and you would like to prepay for the certificate. Either Tammy or Connie will help you through the process of paying for the certificate and signing up for a class. The cost of the Adult CPR or Infant and Child CPR is \$40.00 and the First Aid is \$35.00.

With your simple gift to a family member, coworker or a friend you will be making a difference in Island County and possibly saving a life.

*Chris William, WSU Waste Wise Volunteer*



## Beach Watchers from Three Counties Hunt for Mushrooms

Friday, November 3 was the date of the first Beach Watchers field trip that involved volunteers from three counties: Island, Skagit and Snohomish. About 14 Camano Beach Watchers, led by Scott & Kathleen Chase, met up with another group of about a half dozen Skagit and Snohomish Beach Watchers at a park in Arlington. From there, all headed into the hills between Arlington and Darrington for a morning of hunting for chanterelle mushrooms. The rainy weather did not deter the drenched volunteers, most of whom were able to find at least some chanterelles. The mushroom season was not particularly good this year, as the summer was very dry and the required rain did not arrive until late in the season. There was also evidence of others having been there in the days before we arrived, so the area was somewhat "picked over."

We were done with the hunt by noon, and all headed to a covered park shelter along Squire Creek, near Darrington. Propane stoves and potluck dishes were brought out, and bowls of chanterelles were cooked in butter and wine, to be served over brown rice. With ample food provided by the volunteers, and several bottles of great wine, much of which was bottled by Duane and Sue Hoekstra (Camano BW class of 2003), everyone had a fun time. We all had a chance to visit and meet new Beach Watchers, and everyone looks forward to future field trips with combined groups from different counties.

*Scott Chase, BW Class of 2002, Shore Stewards coordinator*



**If you would like to learn more about the Beach Watcher Program, please contact Kristen Cooley, Program Coordinator at 360-679-7391 or [kcooley@wsu.edu](mailto:kcooley@wsu.edu).**

## Coming Soon: Sound Waters 2007

Although everyone appreciated the "community bonding experience" of the 2006 Sound Waters, the planning committee has decided to try something different this year—presenting the 2007 Sound Waters complete with electricity. The committee began meeting in April and includes several veterans of past campaigns and a whole slew of newcomers from the class of 2006—my goodness, what energy! Sound Waters will be held on Saturday February 3, 2007 at the Coupeville Middle/High School.

The theme of the 2007 Sound Waters, presented by W.S.U. Island County Beach Watchers, is "The Puget Sound Conservation and Recovery Plan." Over half of the classes will relate to one or more of the recommendations put forth by the Puget Sound Partnership. The keynote speaker will highlight the goals, objectives, priorities and recommendations of the Puget Sound Partnership. We have 64 classes scheduled, of which over one-third are new, and a number of the most popular classes from years past are confirmed.

The brochure and registration will be mailed out in late December and will go online January 2, 2007, the first day of registration. Incidentally, the photograph on the cover is courtesy of Jill Hein (Class of 2005) taken during the spring Whale Watch fundraiser.

The committee believes that this will be an especially good "One Day University for Everyone" and we encourage all Beach Watchers and friends to sign up for the event. Sound Waters has sold out quickly for several years and some classes fill within a day or two, so we encourage you to register early.

We are anticipating attendance of more than 500 individuals and we sure could use some help in putting on a successful day for this wonderful organization. Please contact Rudy Deck, [deck@whidbey.net](mailto:deck@whidbey.net) or Jim Somers, [melissamerickel@msn.com](mailto:melissamerickel@msn.com) if you are willing to help out.

*Jim Somers, BW Class of 2004*



# Sound Waters

A One-Day "University" For Everyone

Saturday, February 3, 2007  
Coupeville

An Agenda for a Healthy Puget Sound

Presented by WSU Island County Beach Watchers

- ◆ *Derelict Fishing Gear*
- ◆ *Low Impact Development*
- ◆ *Oiled Wildlife Response*
- ◆ *Ala Spit Restoration*
- ◆ *Creosote Debris Removal*
- ◆ *Salmon and the Near Shore*

  
PUGET SOUND  
ACTION TEAM  
*A Proud Sponsor*



Over 60 Classes of Local Interest

Photo by Jill Hein



## Ala Spit Reclamation: Calling Volunteers'

Tucked away on the north end of Whidbey Island there is a little-known spit of land. It's a pretty spot looking out on Hope Island, where people sit and contemplate, and young lovers stroll. But more importantly it is an estuary, a stopping point for juvenile salmon while they get accustomed to living in salt water. And it is close to becoming an island rather than a spit—sad for humans, and bad for salmon.

The Island County Planning Department is looking for a way to reclaim this spit from what seem to be the effects of a nearby small jetty built at the turn of the century. The county is taking a very scientific approach to this study, one piece of which is counting salmon. That's where I, and maybe you, come in.

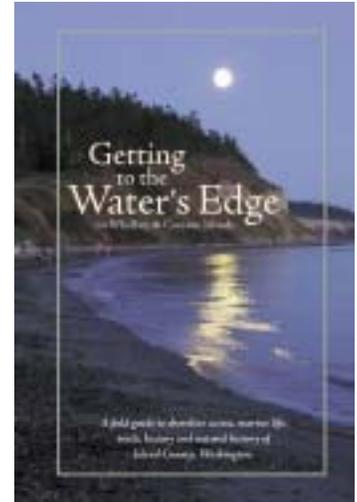
Skagit River System Cooperative (SRSC) and Beach Watchers will be making regularly scheduled fish counts at Ala Spit during winter and spring 2007. We need volunteers for this seining project. Our hope is to have enough volunteers that we can divide into two teams and make lighter work for everyone. We will be working under the supervision of SRSC, on a team led by some of our own experienced seining volunteers.

**VOLUNTEER CALL:** Seining, Ala Spit, North Whidbey Island, One day of training in January or February 2007. Project to be completed in mid-summer 2007. Please call Stewart Congdon at the Lighthouse 360-679-7391, or at home 360-240-0649.

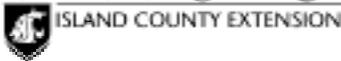
### Great Gift Idea

**Just in Time for Christmas! The new Getting to the Water's Edge will be available before Thanksgiving. It's a must have for anyone living or visiting Island County. Get your copy at the Admiralty Head Lighthouse, WSU Extension main office, or any WSU Beach Watcher event.**

The 176-page, full-color, spiral-bound volume is packed with the latest information, maps and photographs, and includes: 67 beach-access site descriptions, 18 trail maps, LIDAR topographical image of the islands, intertidal-life I.D. guide, parks, dog parks, birding areas, kayaking spots, hiking, horseback riding and bicycle trails



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



*"In the end we will conserve only what we love;  
We will love only what we understand;*

*We will understand only what we have been  
taught."*

*~Baba Dioum, Senegalese ecologist*

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT BEACH LOG  
December 8, 2006**