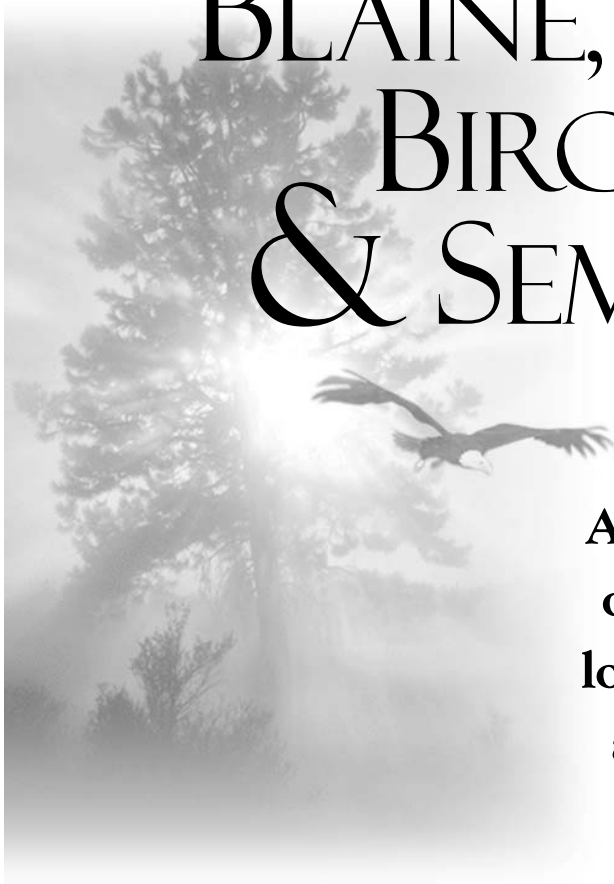


DISCOVER THE BIRDS OF
BLAINE,
BIRCH BAY,
& SEMIAHMOO



**A major wintering area
on the Pacific Flyway
located between Seattle
and Vancouver, B.C.**



**Important Bird Area of
Washington State**

**Northern Anchor of the
Great Washington State
Birding Trail/Cascade Loop**

By Joe Meche,
Newsletter Editor, North Cascades Audubon Society

Illustrations by Sally Hewitt

Important Bird Areas

Great Washington State Birding Trail

Blaine, Birch Bay, and Semiahmoo

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) program is an international effort to identify areas that are significant to healthy populations of birds worldwide. These are areas that provide essential habitat for birds, whether for breeding or resting during migration and winter. To be identified as an IBA, a site must meet specific ornithological criteria that are applied at global, continental, national, and local levels. Committees of experts make the determination as to whether or not a site meets the criteria standards.



The Great Washington State Birding Trail (GWSBT) was established to identify the best places to watch birds in the Evergreen State. Hundreds of thousands of shorebirds, neotropical migrants, and other birds of the Pacific Flyway depend on Washington's wealth of habitats. Some species winter here; others stop to feed and rest during migration; and some species nest here and raise the next generation. Northwest Washington is famous for its large numbers of wintering birds and offers some of the finest wildlife watching in the state.

The GWSBT is a motor route that enables bird watchers to take advantage of every opportunity to view many of Washington's more than 400 species of birds.

The Cascades Loop of the GWSBT is the first of as many as five loops planned throughout Washington state.

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An Important Part of the Puzzle

The protected embayments of the area extending from Birch Bay on the south to Semiahmoo Bay on the north are an integral part of premier loop of the Great Washington State Birding Trail - the Cascades Loop.

The number of birds of a multitude of species that utilize these inland waters can be spectacular and even incomprehensible throughout the winter, peaking in the early spring, just prior to migration.

The number of birds in the area increases coincidentally with the arrival of herring that spawn in these rich waters in April. Vast rafts of birds are visible from any shoreline area.

Three and sometimes five species of loons spend time in these waters, along with all three scoter species, cormorants, grebes, and an amazing variety of waterfowl species.

A lesser but still impressive number of birds nests in the area, raise their young, and are year-round residents. At least a half dozen pairs of Bald Eagles nest in the area and the nesting sites are quite visible, especially during the winter months.

Great Blue Herons have established communal rookeries in the area and are year-round residents taking advantage of the rich food sources provided in these waters. Some shorebirds winter here in large numbers while other species stop by during their spring and fall migrations. Occasional stopovers by birds that are uncommon or rare to the area cause a great deal of excitement among local birders and even a few from farther south and out of state.

The use of a scope or at least binoculars helps to identify most of the species.

For more information, contact:

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www.cityofblaine.com

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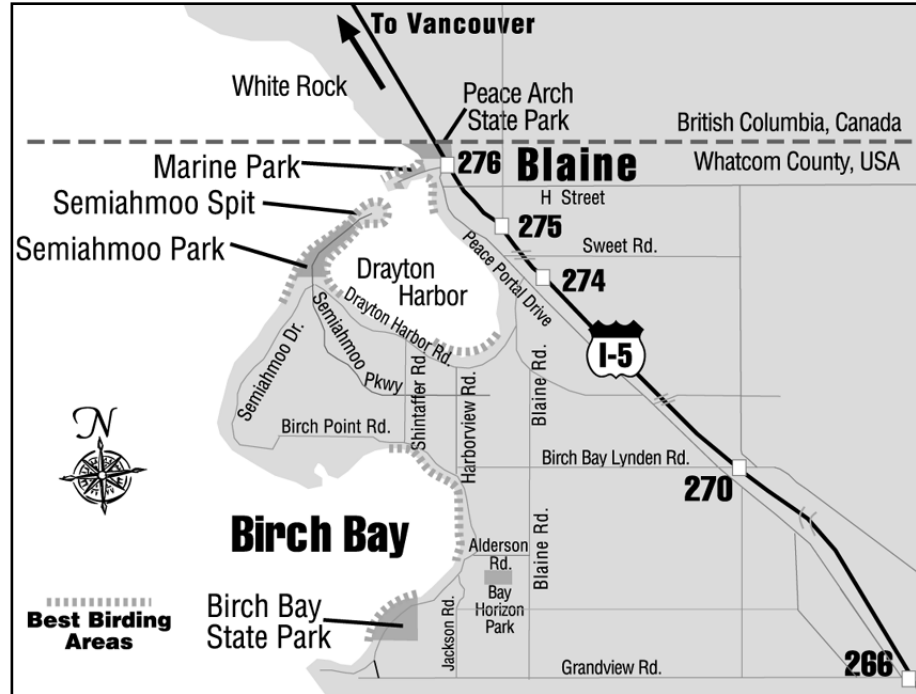
The Area's Bird Species List

The following list of birds is intended as a general guide to some of the bird species that are more commonly seen in the area. Whatcom County boasts more than 320 species of birds and many of those can be found in the diverse habitats of northwest Washington.

Included in this list are some of the species that can be found in the upland wooded habitats that border on the tidelands.

* denotes birds that are known to nest in the area.

- Red-throated Loon
- Pacific Loon
- Common Loon
- Horned Grebe
- Eared Grebe
- Red-necked Grebe
- Western Grebe
- Double-crested
- Cormorant*
- Pelagic Cormorant*
- Canada Goose*
- Brant
- Mallard*
- American Wigeon
- Green-winged Teal
- Surf Scoter
- White-winged Scoter
- Black Scoter
- Harlequin Duck
- Long-tailed Duck
- Common Goldeneye
- Barrow's Goldeneye
- Bufflehead
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Hooded Merganser*
- Glaucous-winged Gull*
- Bonaparte's Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Mew Gull
- Common Tern
- Caspian Tern
- Great Blue Heron*
- Black-bellied Plover
- Killdeer*
- Greater Yellowlegs



- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Short-billed Dowitcher | Pileated Woodpecker* | Yellow-rumped Warbler* |
| Dunlin | Downy Woodpecker* | Yellow Warbler* |
| Black Turnstone | Hairy Woodpecker* | Common Yellowthroat* |
| Western Sandpiper | Northern Flicker* | Brewer's Black-bird* |
| Red-tailed Hawk* | Tree Swallow* | Red-winged Blackbird* |
| Bald Eagle* | Barn Swallow* | Savannah Sparrow* |
| Peregrine Falcon* | Northwestern Crow* | White-crowned Sparrow* |
| Northern Harrier | Steller's Jay* | Song Sparrow* |
| Great Horned Owl* | Black-capped Chickadee* | Fox Sparrow* |
| Short-eared Owl* | Bewick's Wren* | Spotted Towhee* |
| Belted Kingfisher* | Marsh Wren* | |
| Rock Dove* | American Robin* | |

Rare and Uncommon Species

The areas around Drayton Harbor and Semiahmoo Bay have been stopovers for rare and uncommon species over the past few years. The following list includes some of those species that have been observed within the past few years.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| American White Pelican | Hudsonian Godwit |
| Parasitic Jaeger | Bar-tailed Godwit |
| Thayer's Gull | Marbled Godwit |
| Little Gull | Long-billed Curlew |
| Heermann's Gull | Whimbrel |
| Great Egret | Red Knot |

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DISCOVER THE BIRDS OF BLAINE, BIRCH BAY & SEMIAHMOO

Northwest Washington's Finest Birdwatching Experience

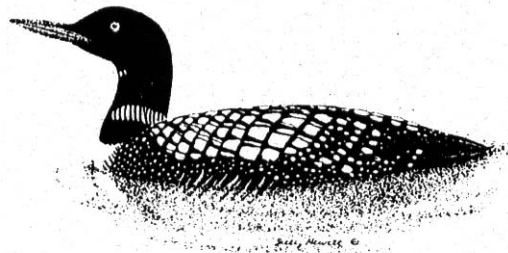
In the northwest corner of Washington state is some of the finest winter bird-watching found anywhere in the entire country. In the immense estuarine environments of Drayton Harbor, into Semiahmoo Bay and south to Birch Bay can be found some of the largest concentrations of waterfowl on the Pacific Coast.

This largely pristine, natural area provides food and shelter to an amazing variety of species during the winter months and during migration. The area of Drayton Harbor/Semiahmoo Bay, at Blaine, Washington, has been designated as one of 53 Important Bird Areas in Washington state. Marine Park in Blaine is a shining example of what can be done to ensure that birds have ample sites for resting and feeding during the long winter months prior to the return to their northern breeding grounds.

The Blaine Birding Committee has long-range plans to continue to improve the area for the benefit of birds and birdwatchers. These improvements will focus on the tidelands, wetlands, and associated uplands that cover the area between Blaine and the US/Canada border, south to Birch Bay and Birch Bay State Park.

The only rules that apply are common courtesies and considerations for others who might use the area and for the birds and other wildlife that utilize the area to sustain themselves.

- Respect private property and follow the routes indicated as part of the birding loop.
- Do not disturb or pick up any birds, especially young birds.
- No camping or overnight parking except in specified camp-grounds.
- Keep dogs on a leash except in specified off-leash areas; pick up dog feces; and do NOT allow dogs to chase birds.
- Resist the urge to feed the birds. They do quite well on their own and would only become dependent on handouts.



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