

First Master Birder Class Holds 25 Year Class Reunion on November 10, 2013

By Neil Zimmerman, Master Birder



Front Row, left to right: Mike Seamans, Jan Sleight, Barb Jensen, Robin Ricks, Linda Anchondo, Paula Thurman, Courtenay Jackson, Lee Barnes. Back Row, left to right: Dan Victor, Marcus Roening, Alan Wenokur, Keith Geller, Neil Zimmerman, Dennis Paulson (instructor), Jan Lewinsohn, Hal Opperman. Not attending: Bob Sundstom, Idie Ulsh, Gerry Adams, Robert Ashbaugh, Eileen Bryant, Kaethe Barton, Becky Benton, Neal Jackson, Margie Palmer. Deceased: Bob Benton, Ardell Kuckenbecker

In mid November, the first Master Birder class of 1988-1989 held their 25th reunion. Eleven of us met that morning for birding at the Union Bay Natural Area. The birding was secondary to the enthusiastic conversation!

Then the group was joined by other classmates and their spouses at the Seattle Audubon nature shop for a potluck. Sixteen out of the original 26 members were present. The group enjoyed renewing friendships and sharing stories. The amount of food showed that eating was second to birding in this group.

Members of this group include the founder of Tweeters, several Audubon chapter presidents, the editor and writer of the Birder's Guide to Washington and other authors. Thousands of hours continue to be volunteered by this group for breeding bird surveys, leading field trips, FUN programs, Christmas bird counts, and organizational logistics for Audubon events like Hazel Wolf's 100th birthday. Another member is one of the lead writers for BirdNote. Another member has a successful nature photography business.

Some of the group, if no longer active in Seattle Audubon, have remained active volunteers in their communities.

We all agreed that what we valued most from the Master Birder program was the friendships. It was especially Dennis Paulson as the instructor who inspired us to be inquisitive, involved and passionate about the environment.