



Volume 50 #8 May 2017

New Bird Identification Poster for NCW

by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

North Central Washington Audubon Society has a new bird identification poster. Unlike existing bird ID posters, the new poster is designed to show only birds that are common to North Central Washington throughout much of the year. The poster can be modified as needed. It can be printed at a variety of sizes and at a reasonable cost. All the bird illustrations on the poster are derived from my digital photographs using a variety of commercial software including Photoshop. I'd be happy to discuss my process for making the illustrations if you are curious. Mark Oswood has the master files for printing and paper copies of the poster for use at North Central Washington Audubon Society events this year.

editor's note - You may get a copy of the entire poster in full color at the Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest

Common Birds of North Central Washington

North Central Washington Audubon Society

P.O. Box 2934, Wenatchee, WA 98807

www.ncwaudubon.org



The mission of the
 North Central Washington Audubon Society
 is "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing
 on birds and their habitats, for the benefit of people and
 the biological diversity of North Central Washington."

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and Mark Oswood | 662-9087 | moswood@nwi.net

Field Trips | OPEN

Membership | Mark Oswood | 662-9087 | moswood@nwi.net

Newsletter | Teri J Pieper | 630-6224 | teripieper@hotmail.com

Science Officer | Don McIvor | 997-9456 | puma@methownet.com

Communications | Treesa Hertzell | webmaster@ncwaudubon.org

Festival Coordinator | Richard Scranton | rscrans4350@yahoo.com

At Large:

Merry Roy | 881-1083 | merry8roy@gmail.com

Janet Bauer | jsrbauer@gmail.com

Jenny Graevell | Facebook admin

Website - www.ncwaudubon.org

Subscribe to our email list at www.ncwaudubon.org

Mailing address - PO Box 2934 Wenatchee, WA 98807

North Central Washington Audubon Society is on Facebook too

All phone numbers in the Wild Phlox are area code 509 unless otherwise indicated.

**Bluebird Box Strike Team
 Sweeps Aeneas Valley**

photo and article by Todd Thorn, Wauconda

Even as Western and Mountain Bluebirds were staking out breeding territories across Okanogan County, six bluebird enthusiasts teamed up to maintain or replace 80 boxes along nine miles of the Aeneas Valley Road east of Tonasket. On April 8, Nancy O'Neil, Lee Johnson, John Danielson, Gary Rittenmeyer, Ivan Tilbury, and Todd Thorn met to renovate this bluebird box trail which had gone untended for a number of years. After working a handful of boxes together, the group split into four units leapfrogging ahead of each other from box to box. The party broke up as a spring squall drowned everyone's enthusiasm! Replacement boxes were built by Lee, John, and Nancy. Many thanks to these generous volunteers for all their hard work!



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To join the National Audubon Society which also includes a subscription to the Wild Phlox, please see their website at www.audubon.org or drop us a note and we will send you a form for a special rate introductory membership.

Last week a photographer friend sent me two photos of this Common Loon tangled up with fishing tackle. There may even be a hook embedded somewhere on the bird. It's a tragic thing to see. The bird was on the Columbia near Walla Walla Park at the time. Sometimes an angler may honestly lose fishing line but often I see it abandoned on the shorelines of our rivers and lakes. I try to gather it up and dispose of it so it no longer poses a hazard to birds and other wildlife. John and others have watched the river to see if the bird sticks around but it is migration season and it appears that the bird has moved on. Hopefully it will survive.

We are finally seeing a bit of warm weather this week. The thermometer may have hit 60 today. Compared to last year, it seems like everything is two weeks behind. However, the birds arrived on time and I wonder how they are faring. Nights have been frosty and the hummingbirds are anxious to eat from the feeders at first light and into the evening. Are there enough bugs for all the fly-catching birds? The swallows are moving into nest boxes. Osprey are carrying sticks to nests on snags and platforms. Great-horned Owls and Common Ravens are already raising young. Nature keeps moving forward with great optimism.



Common Loon tangled in fishing tackle
photo by John Barta, Wenatchee



Dusky Grouse displaying to attract a mate
photo by Janet Bauer, Winthrop

This time of year, each day is full of anticipation of new birds arriving from the south or new wildflowers on our hill or the scent of cottonwoods ready to unfurl. It is lovely to once again see the hills covered with a bright green velvet and soon they will be covered with the yellow of arrowleaf balsamroot too!

In our forest of burned pine trees, we are finally seeing birds making cavities. It has been two and a half years since the fire. The first year we saw lots of woodpeckers gleaning insects from the snags but that activity has slowed. Last fall I saw Pygmy Nuthatches working on them which is a great relief since they have always used our siding to create nesting holes, even when faced with nest boxes close at hand. And recently I saw a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers working on a snag.

NCW Recent Bird Sightings

compiled from the ncwabird email list
and eBird and Tweeters by Teri J Pieper

Douglas County: A male Anna's Hummingbird arrived at a feeder in Bridgeport at the end of March. Two Swainson's Hawks were seen in Douglas County on April 10. This is the earliest date they have been reported in the area. Greater Sage-grouse have been seen at the Leahy lek site. White-throated Swifts were seen in the Rimrock area, south of Highway 2. A Long-billed Curlew was seen east of Waterville. A Sagebrush Sparrow was found in Moses Coulee.

Okanogan County: Yellow-rumped Warblers and Rufous Hummingbirds arrived in the Methow during the first week of April followed shortly by Osprey and Cassin's Finches. 44 Mountain Bluebirds and one Black-backed Woodpecker were observed near Winthrop. Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Wood Ducks were seen at the Twisp Ponds. With warmer weather, Sandhill Cranes are on the move all over the county.

Chelan County: Gray-crowned Rosy-finches were seen feeding on a highway pull out immediately west of Stevens Pass. White-throated Swifts were seen above Burch Mountain near Wenatchee. A Golden Eagle was seen near Chelan Butte. A Wild Turkey was seen on the Little Wenatchee River Road. Lesser Goldfinches are still being seen in Cashmere.

Fodder From the Feeder

By Karen Mulcahy, Winthrop

Mycoplasma gallisepticum - what does this mean to you? Well, it didn't mean a lot to me till I heard about House Finch Eye Disease last year through the NCWAS yahoo bird group emails (thanks, Teri Pieper). This poultry pathogen made a successful cross-species leap from chicken and turkeys to House Finches in the spring of 1994. House Finches are native to Western North America, but the illegal sale of these "Hollywood" birds, as they were called in the mid 20th century, and the fear of prosecution, caused the sellers to release them to the wild on the eastern seaboard. A few managed to survive the chilly winter, and eventually thrived and spread to meet up with the western population. Unfortunately, these finches weren't as genetically diverse as the native western population because they came from a small sample of released birds. When *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (which causes respiratory infections in poultry) crossed to these eastern House Finches it spread to most of their range within two and a half years and eventually killed half of the population!

But don't despair. Despite all this bird death, some good came from it. A Belgian ornithologist, Andre Dhondt, joined the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in 1994, and within months had sent 50,000 paper forms to Feederwatch participants to gather data on this new disease. Over the next ten years, he and his assistant Wesley Hochachka received 300,000 reports from 10,000 participants. It was a rare opportunity to study a population before and after a disease occurrence. This is a notable example of citizen science in action!

You are now asking how was this helpful and what about the poor birds? Well, it meant the researchers saw the disease strike and devastate large populations of finches, but as the numbers of finches declined, so did the disease occurrence. The disease regulated the population dynamics of the host. The finches that survived developed immunity, so the disease had to increase in virulence to keep infecting birds successfully. By 2010, the disease had

spread across the U.S, and now remains stable, having a 5-10% prevalence in eastern House Finches. Wild birds can recover from the disease and captive birds studied retained partial immunity for at least one year. This disease also affects American Goldfinches and rarely, Purple Finches, Evening Grosbeaks, and Pine Grosbeaks.

There is a lesson in all of this research that can be applied to humans. Most of us have heard the term "herd immunity", often in relation to encouraging people to get their flu vaccines. Why? Because if you don't vaccinate everyone, the people not vaccinated will be hosts for the bacteria to live and evolve into stronger pathogens. The House Finch Eye Disease proved this point dramatically and the research may be applied to diseases like the current Zika outbreak. It ultimately has been responsible for the funding of a program called Ecology and Evolution of Infectious Diseases.

How can you do your part to prevent the spread of this nasty pathogen? Clean your feeders every month (or every two weeks in very active times) with a 10% bleach solution, or mild vinegar solution, rinse well and dry completely. Rake the area underneath feeders to remove old droppings and moldy seed. Space feeders widely to prevent crowding, and purchase feeders that can be easily taken apart and cleaned, avoiding tube feeders with large holes that birds put their heads in to feed. Most importantly, take the feeders down if you notice any diseased birds. These birds have red, crusty eyes, sometimes puffing out of their heads or completely shut, and may act oddly at the feeder. Clean feeders and leave them down for a few days or up to two weeks to discourage the diseased birds.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology online has great articles on this subject if you would like more info and pictures of diseased birds.

It's pretty birdy out there right now, so keep a good eye on your feeders.

Join Our NCWAS Email List

By Mark Oswood, Wenatchee

For some years, NCWAS has had an email list, powered by the well-known MailChimp system. We send occasional messages to the people on this list, mostly late-breaking news of events or volunteer opportunities. If you are not on our email list but would like to be, please go to the home page of our website (www.ncwaudubon.org). On the right side of the page there is a block where you enter your name and email address. The MailChimp system will guide you through the signup. Rest assured that we're frugal with our messages and the MailChimp system provides an easy unsubscribe should you wish to leave. The email system is one more way that we try to stay in touch with each other, along with The Wild Phlox, our website, our Facebook page and our listserv.

Bird Walks at Beebe Springs

By Virginia Palumbo, Chelan

Twice-monthly Citizen Science bird walks continue at Beebe Springs, near Chelan Falls, all summer on the first and third Wednesday of each month. The survey data is shared with Ron Fox, WDFW, who has used the data from past years for a grant application this year. Birders of all skill levels are welcome! Please contact Virginia Palumbo at vwpalumbo@gmail.com or 682-5969, for start time and to sign-up.

Meet the NCWAS Board

An Ongoing Series
by Penny Tobiska, Wenatchee

Here is an introduction to our Wild Phlox editor, Teri Pieper.

We know of your interest in birds, photography, and writing. How did these interests develop? Photography and writing – my father was the long-time sports editor for the Wenatchee World and he did all of his photography as well. He always made sure I had a camera so I learned from an early age about cameras and film and composition. And he had high expectations that I would craft sentences correctly so both of these things were ingrained in me at a young age. As a family, we spent a lot of time on vacations camping or going to the beach and I spent much of my growing up time out of doors. I did not come to birding until quite a bit later when I learned about the local Audubon Chapter where I lived and found out that they provided field trips with helpful people eager to teach others about the birds and other wildlife that were observed along the way.



Teri and a puppy
photo by Don McIvor, Methow Valley

What are some of your other interests? Hiking in the hills and mountains around the Methow Valley with my dogs. Dog agility. Camping with my husband and our dogs in our little pop-up trailer. Travel. Digging razor clams. Creating photo encaustic art.

Describe what you like about living in the Methow Valley. The Methow Valley is blessed with many acres of public lands available for everyone to use for outdoor recreation. The Methow Valley has a keen sense of community. The Methow Valley supports the arts. The Methow Valley population is overall caring and generous to others.

What are your favorite birding spots in North Central Washington? In the Methow – Twisp Ponds, Sun Mountain Beaver Pond, Big Valley. The Okanogan Highlands and Sinlahekin Wildlife area east of here. Moses Coulee in Douglas County. There are many others but these are a few of the favorites that come to mind.

Birding in the Okanogan Highlands

OHA is teaming up with the Okanogan Land Trust (OLT) to offer an educational birding field trip in the Okanogan Highlands on June 17. The event will begin at a private landowner's property in Wauconda and then move to Lost Lake for a finger food potluck picnic, followed by an afternoon birding hike through OHA's Lost Lake Wetland and Wildlife Preserve. Priority registration will be given to current OHA and OLT members up until June 3, at which time the priority registration window will close and registration will open to the general public, provided that spaces are available. Registration is limited, so be sure to sign up early if you are interested. This might be a good time to renew your membership! Event registration will be conducted by OHA, while carpooling for registered participants will be coordinated by OLT.



Birders at Lost Lake

photo and article by Julie Ashmore,
Okanogan Highlands

Established in 2002, Okanogan Land Trust (OLT) is a local nonprofit organization connecting people to the land and conserving and sustaining our working farms and ranches, wildlife habitats, and water resources for generations to come. OLT currently holds 25 conservation easements on more than 8,700 acres, and serves eastern Okanogan County and western Ferry County in north-central Washington.

For more info or to register, contact julie@okanoganhighlands.org or call Julie at 476-2432.

OHA recently released a music compilation album called *Highland Voices*, as a fundraiser for the organization. Community members can visit okanoganhighlands.org/music/highland-voices to learn more about the project, to see photos from the concert, and to purchase a digital download or CD. Buying this album is a terrific way to support the free Highland Wonders educational series.

More info about this and other upcoming educational events:
www.okanoganhighlands.org/education/hw
Questions? julie@okanoganhighlands.org
or 476-2432

OHA is a non-profit organization that works to educate the public on watershed issues. The Highland Wonders educational series features the natural history of the Okanogan Highlands and surrounding areas. OHA's Education Program is designed to build the community's capacity for environmental stewardship by increasing understanding of local natural history through a variety of free public learning opportunities.

A Birders' Guide to Washington Goes Online

by Jane Hadley,
Washington Ornithological Society
reprinted with permission

Birders of Washington state soon will be able to get and give current information online about birding spots all over the state. A goal the Washington Ornithological Society (WOS) has long harbored is now about to be realized: to put *A Birder's Guide to Washington* online so that birders can share their observations and experiences of birding spots mentioned in the book with other birders. This will allow birders to have current information about spots where they might like to bird. The hope is also that keeping the guide updated online will make producing the third edition of the guide a somewhat easier process than it was to produce the second edition. The book authors/revisers will now have the eyes and ears of hundreds of birders on their territories – not just their own. The new website was launched on April 15.

The project is co-sponsored by WOS and the American Birding Association (ABA). More than 35 authors revised the first edition to create the 613-page second edition. The ABA published the second edition in August, 2015. For the online version, 36 “curators,” many of them the revisers who produced the second print edition, will monitor online comments on their sections and periodically will decide whether the book content needs to be updated online to reflect the more important and permanent changes at a birding location. We encourage any and all birders to leave comments about the birding destinations covered in the guide.

Has the habitat at a particular location described in the book changed because of a fire or development? Have the birds seen there changed? Has a road been closed or does it now require a high-clearance vehicle? Is this spot teeming with mosquitoes or

ticks at certain times of the year? Do you have any suggestions about when and how to bird it? What's your opinion of this birding spot? Please share your birding experiences with other Washington birders! This new website shares some things in common with the website of the Washington Trails Association, where hikers leave reports of conditions on trails they've recently hiked, such as whether the trail is snow-covered, whether wildflowers are out or how difficult the hike is. It helps people make decisions about when and whether to hike a particular trail. We hope this website will provide similar benefits to Washington's birders.

If you see strike-through text and magenta-colored text on the website, it's not a website glitch! We want to be transparent about changes to the second edition text. Added text will be done in magenta and deletions will be identifiable through strikethrough. Both the old and new book content is copyrighted. A copyright statement on the “About” webpage gives the copyright details. Project coordinator is Jane Hadley, while Randy Robinson did the considerable web programming to create the website. He worked with web designer Kathy Fridstein, principal of aftertheimage, a design studio. Penny Rose continued in her role as WOS liaison, while Scott Flora is the ABA liaison. The project benefited from the full support of the WOS board and its president Jim Danzenbaker as well as the ABA and its president Jeff Gordon. Printed copies of the second edition can be purchased at Seattle Audubon Society's Nature Shop, Powell's Books, Buteo Books, or through other booksellers.

Birds of Oregon Online Site Guide

By Chuck Gates, East Cascades Audubon Society

East Cascades Audubon Society, based in Bend, Oregon, has announced a new version of their online *Birds of Oregon Site Guide*. This new version is designed to be more user friendly and more technology friendly. You can now use the site guide in conjunction with your smart phone's navigation capabilities to get turn by turn directions to the most popular birding areas in the state. GPS coordinates, maps, eBird checklists and much more are right at your fingertips. It's never been easier to find birding locations in Oregon. Check out the Seasonal Hotspot table for each county and you will find the three best places to bird in each season. There are even DeLorme map page numbers and coordinates for the old school and the technology challenged.

To find and use this online guide, go to www.ecaudubon.org. Thanks to over 100 Oregon birders for making it one of the best state guides in the country. It's made for birders by birders and **IT'S FREE**, courtesy of the East Cascades Audubon Society. Now get out your day planners and start exploring this wonderful state.

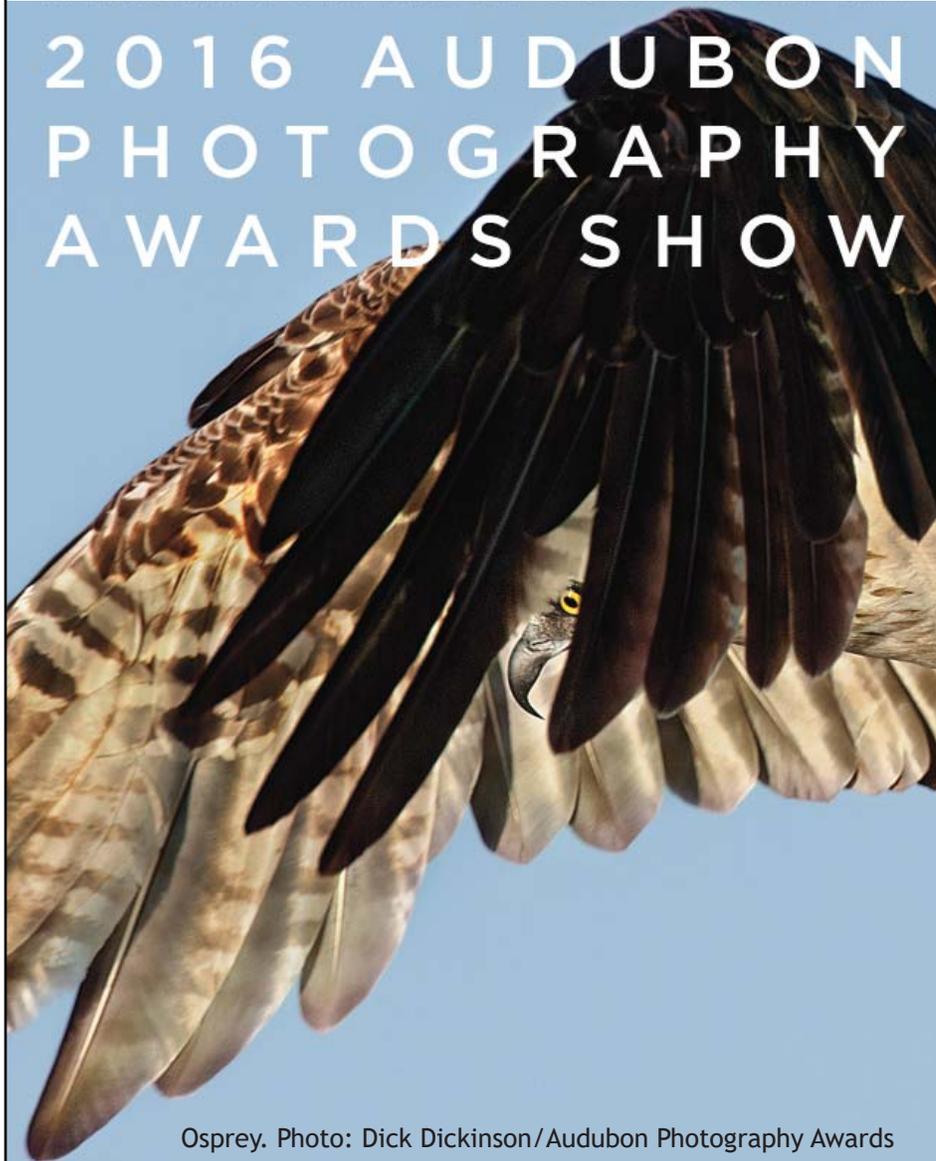
Wenas Campout

by Laura Johnson

You're invited to attend a celebration of birds, botany, and the beauty of spring in eastern Washington. The annual Wenas Audubon Campout takes place on Memorial Day Weekend (May 26-29) at the Wenas Creek Campground, SW of Ellensburg. This casual and friendly gathering offers a variety of activities, including birding field trips, flower walks, field sketching, and bat and owl prowls. All are welcome. Visit the Wenas Audubon website (www.wenasaudubon.org) for directions, an outline of field trips and programming, and more information (2017 program coming soon). Pre-registration is not required. The campout is free and open to all ages; however, donations are encouraged. Every vehicle must display a Washington State Discover Pass (<http://www.discoverpass.wa.gov/>). Contacts: Doris Johnson, dellenj@comcast.net or Laura Johnson, lejohns13@gmail.com

Award-Winning Nature Photographs on Display at Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest

2016 AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS SHOW



Osprey. Photo: Dick Dickinson/Audubon Photography Awards

Roadshow of Audubon Photography Awards, sponsored by NCWAS

by Mark Oswood, Wenatchee

Would you like to walk among the winning bird photographs from this past year's Audubon Photography Awards and learn more about your local birdlife? Visit the Sun Room in the River Haus (Leavenworth Bird Fest headquarters at Wenatchee River Institute) on Saturday (Family Discovery Day), from 10-2. In addition to the photographs, we'll have things to see, touch and hear plus some swell handouts to take home with you.

Selected from over 7,000 entries - submitted from all 50 states, DC, and Canada - the winning photos were published in the May-June 2016 issue of Audubon magazine. A panel of five judges had the daunting task of sifting through the stunning images and grading them based on technical quality, originality, and artistic merit.

For more information about Bird Fest, see www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.org/

Yakima River Canyon Birding Festival

by Jan Demorest, Kittitas Audubon

Come bird with KEEN (Kittitas Environmental Education Network) for three days during the second weekend of May and discover the natural beauty of Central Washington State! Kittitas County features diverse and spectacular habitats ranging from snow-capped mountains, thousands of acres of public forest, lush riparian corridors and endangered shrub-steppe open space. The Yakima River Canyon is an Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA) with some of the highest densities of passerines and birds of prey in the State, some of them obligates to the shrub-steppe habitat. The Yakima River Canyon Bird Fest will offer expert-led field trips, vendors, extended field trips, workshops, lectures, and keynote speaker, Paul Bannick, social events, a silent auction, and a plethora of bird watching during early spring! Come join us for spring in the shrub-steppe May 12-14! Contact: www.ycic.org or kittitasee@ycic.org

Get Outside with the Chelan Douglas Land Trust

by Hillary Schwirtlich, Wenatchee

Bugs, Butterflies, and Blooms (and Birds!) in the Entiat with Phil Archibald: May 20 from 9-12 at Stormy Creek Preserve.

Bird ID Skills Building at Walla Walla Point Park with Susan Ballinger: May 24 from 7:30 to 9:45 am. Contact CDLT for more information. 667-9708 or hilary@cdlandtrust.org.

May Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

Items in bold text are sponsored or co-sponsored by NCWAS

1st and 3rd Wednesdays	Beebe Springs Bird Walks	See page 4
May 4 & 9	Wildflower walks	At Leavenworth Ski Hill. RSVP at 667-9708 or hilary@cdlandtrust.org
May 5-7	Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival	See www.shorebirdfestival.com
May 6, 11,17,26, 29	Spring Naturalist Walks	Methow Conservancy. Reserve your spot. 996-2870 or mary@methowconservancy.org
May 12-14	Yakima River Bird Festival	See page 7.
May 18-21	Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest	See www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.org/
May 20	Bugs, Butterflies, Blooms in the Entiat	CDLT Stormy Creek Preserve. See page 7
May 24	Bird ID Skills with Susan Ballinger	See page 7
May 26-29	Wenas Audubon Campout	See page 6 for more information
June 17	Birding in the Okanogan Highlands	With Okanogan Highlands Alliance and Okanogan Land Trust. See page 5.



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Visit the NCW Audubon Society website for updates on these and other events
www.ncwaudubon.org