



artwork by Steven D'Amato

## Annual Audubon Wenas Creek Campout

Volume 51 #7 May 2018  
photo and article by Vicki Cibicki,  
Cashmere

The Wenas Valley south of Ellensburg is a wonder of beauty in the spring. My husband and I attended the 54th annual Washington State Audubon Campout last year over Memorial Day weekend. It's only about an hour and a half drive from our home in Cashmere. We pulled a trailer and had no problem with access. The area is nestled in the valley and provides opportunities for birding, walking, biking and hiking. Bluebird boxes line the main dirt road as you drive into the Wenas Creek Campground. There are so many bluebirds, both Mountain and Western. Stunning!

Repeats and diehards show up a few days early to claim the site. Early birds tie up bird feeders in advance of the group's arrival. Lots of hummingbird feeders hang throughout, humming with activity.

Each evening campers gather around the Larrison Tree. Stalwart leader Doris

Johnson describes the following day's outings and Wilson Cady captures the day's sightings on a large board. Last year, Fish and Wildlife presented a talk on bats, bringing out a device that they use to amplify their calls. As the night progressed, the more rapid it fired! Larry Schwitters gave an amazing talk and slide show of his research on Black and Vaux's Swifts. His photos of their nests under many Washington State waterfalls were spectacular.

There is also a flora and fauna group that gathers plant samples, putting them in tubes of water for a beautiful display on a large board. All are expertly identified.

Color and sounds abound on the hikes. Whether you choose a more strenuous outing such as Black Canyon or an easy hike along Dry Creek, you'll see sapsuckers, Western Tanagers, bluebirds, Bullock's Orioles, warblers,

raptors, flycatchers, grosbeaks and hummingbirds. There were Brewer's Blackbirds feasting on small blue butterflies. At the Wenas Lake camp store, under the eaves, there was a nesting Say's Phoebe with three open mouths to feed. You may want to help monitor the bluebird boxes or head out to the lake. Hog Ranch Ridge or Lady Bug Canyon are other great hikes. It's all good!

There is one down side of this area. Washington Audubon has been coming here for 54 years. Unfortunately, it was recently designated as an off-road vehicle park. So, it is rather dusty when the ORVs head out or come in from their day of getting dirty. But since birders are early morning risers, it wasn't much of an issue.

Eightyfour year old Doris Johnson has handed over the reins. It'll be exciting to see how the new and younger leader will continue this incredible tradition. As she ended the program one night, she said, "If birds sing, Auduboners should sing." Let's sing!

On the drive out, we counted 26 bluebirds in less than five miles! The icing on the cake was a stop at Umtanum Falls. What a hidden gem! The falls were stunning and the water icy cold as we both jumped in and played. It was a perfect ending to a great weekend.

The Audubon Wenas campout is May 26-28. Visit [www.wenasaudubon.org](http://www.wenasaudubon.org) for more information.



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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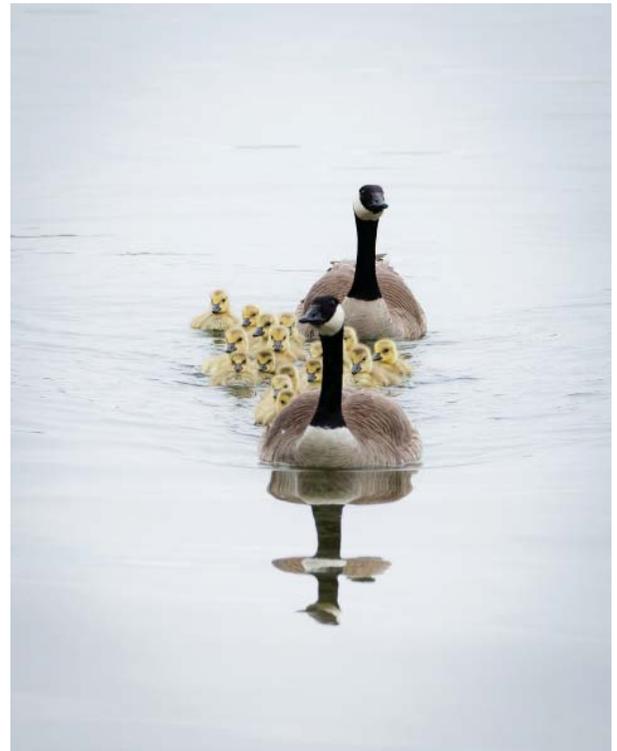
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North Central Washington Audubon Society is on Facebook too

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



Canada Goose family  
photo by Sherry Malotte

This is one of the winning photos in the  
2018 NCW Audubon photo contest.  
See more of the winners on page 4 and 5  
and on our website.  
[www.ncwaudubon.org](http://www.ncwaudubon.org)

## North Central Washington Audubon Society Wild Phlox Subscription Form

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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](http://www.audubon.org)

Citizen Science. What does that term mean to you?

I looked at numerous websites to learn more about it and my favorite definition was from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology - "projects in which volunteers partner with scientists to answer real-world questions." If you google Citizen Science, you can find many organizations that endorse and participate in numerous Citizen Science activities. Audubon has long been known for its Christmas Bird Count, perhaps one of the first widely-known Citizen Science projects around.

Why do I even bring this up? Here at NCW Audubon, we participate in many activities that involve Citizen Science – bird monitoring at Beebe Springs and on the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust properties, Christmas Bird Counts and the Sagebrush Songbird Study are some examples.

It turns out that the term Citizen Science is offensive to some people as it may imply that it does not include non-citizens. Recently there was a long and sometimes heated discussion about it on an Audubon WA sponsored listserv about state-wide conservation issues. In the end, I don't think anyone changed their mind, but it became apparent that the term Citizen Science is to be replaced by Community Science or some other terminology. Apparently, this has been a hot topic of discussion in the Audubon community and I was completely unaware of it.

I spent some time reading on the National Audubon website, including the Christmas Bird Count pages and did not see Citizen Science mentioned. Certainly, I did not get through the entire massive site. I did see Community Science used instead. Audubon Washington has already made the change to Community Science. On the other hand, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology continues to use Citizen Science.

What does that mean for us? The term Citizen Science is much ingrained in my mind and it will be a challenge to remember to use a new term. You often see it mentioned in The Wild Phlox. Last month it was in a headline and I think it is used more than once in this issue.

What do you think? Do you find it offensive? Should we use some other terminology such as Community Science or something else?

Meanwhile, the volunteers at North Central Washington Audubon Society would like to extend a sincere apology for the mess up in last month's Wild Phlox printing. The printer printed the March issue (again) instead of the April issue and the volunteer printing crew went through all the work to get it ready to mail and sent out the March issue for the second time. The mistake was not caught until it showed up in members' mailboxes and some folks recognized articles they'd read the month before. Quickly, the printer got out the correct issue and soon you had the April issue in your hands. We apologize if you missed any time-sensitive events that may have happened before you had a chance to read about them.



Horned Grebe fishing on the Columbia near Pateros  
by Joe Roy, Wenatchee

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## NCW Recent Bird Sightings

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

Chelan County: A Sharp-tailed and Cooper's Hawk and a Northern Goshawk were all seen at Burch Mountain. Near Leavenworth, a Black-headed Grosbeak, Nashville Warbler and Lincoln Sparrows were seen.

Douglas County: Sage Thrashers, Brewer's Sparrows and Golden Eagles were seen at the Chester Butte Wildlife Area. A Townsend's Solitaire was in a flock with both bluebirds in Central Ferry Canyon. At the Packwood Cemetery there were Pygmy Nuthatches, Red Crossbills and a Common Redpoll. 100 Common Redpolls were seen on Dyer Hill Road.

Ferry County: The Osprey returned to Curlew Lake. Ruby Crowned Kinglets were singing in the brush near the Lake.

Two Snow Geese were mixed in with a group of Canada Geese.

Okanogan County: Sandhill Cranes were seen for much of the last month at Cameron Lake Road along with continuing Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harriers and swans. A Golden Eagle was seen at McLaughlin Canyon. A Merlin was seen in downtown Winthrop. A Northern Saw-whet Owl and a Barred Owl were heard and seen near Mazama. Williamson's Sapsuckers were seen at the Loup Loup campground. Harlequin Ducks have been seen on the Twisp River. An American White Pelican was seen at Pearygin Lake.

# Spring Audubon Field Trips

by Virginia Palumbo, Chelan and  
Mark Johnston, Leavenworth

**Beebe Springs Citizen Science Bird Surveys** are on the first and third Wednesday of each month. Come for a leisurely 1 1/2 mile walk to see spring migrants, waterfowl and riparian/wetlands species. Contact Virginia at [vwpalumbo@gmail.com](mailto:vwpalumbo@gmail.com) for start times and details. On **May 12** there will be a guided field trip to **Beebe Springs**. See last month's Phlox or the website for details.

## May 26 – Bridgeport and Brewster areas

By May 26, virtually all the spring breeding birds will be present in the areas around the Columbia River. We will spend the day birding around Bridgeport and Brewster including Bridgeport Bar, Washburn Island and Cassimer Bar. Dress for the weather and bring lunch, snacks, water, etc. There will be about three miles of walking on uneven ground. We will meet at 6:30 am at the Sweet River Bakery in Pateros (203 Lakeshore Drive) and return by 3 pm. This trip is limited to ten birders. To reserve your space, email trip leader Mark Johnston at [s697striata@frontier.com](mailto:s697striata@frontier.com) or call 548-5766.

## May 31 – Twisp Area Hotspots

We will visit a few sites around Twisp that offer a great mix of habitats and wonderful birding. Though there is evidence of recent years' fires, excellent areas remain that will provide a good day birding in the field with a diverse mix of bird species. Dress for the weather and bring lunch, snacks, water, etc. We will walk short distances over uneven ground. Drivers will need a Discover Pass. Meet at the Community Center in Twisp on Highway 20 at 6:30 am and return by 3 pm. This trip is limited to ten birders. To sign up, email trip leader Mark Johnston at [s697striata@frontier.com](mailto:s697striata@frontier.com) or call 548-5766.

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# 2018 Photo Contest Results

by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

The 2018 NCW Audubon photo contest was designed to encourage people within our four-county territory to enter their best bird photographs in one of three categories: Adult Enthusiast, Youth, and Pro. We know that our members take some remarkable photos of birds in our area. We saw an opportunity to showcase some local photographs in combination with the traveling exhibit of the National Audubon photo contest winners at the 2018 Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest. We hope to show our winning photos throughout our territory for about six months after Bird Fest. If you have a location in your area that you think would be good to exhibit the photos please contact Bruce McCammon or Mark Oswood. Thanks.

Thirty-seven people submitted 101 photos to the Adult Enthusiast category, four photographers entered eleven photos to the Pro category and one Youth photographer entered three photos. The photos gave our three judges a lot to think about as they scored each image. The judges' numeric scores were combined to determine the photos that had the highest scores in each category. The highest ranked photo in any category, a beautiful Bohemian Waxwing with a berry by Peter Bauer, was awarded "Best of Show". There was a three-way tie for honors in the Adult Enthusiast category so a fourth judge was asked to rank each of the three to determine the awards. All the winning entries are posted on the NCW Audubon website, [www.ncwaudubon.org](http://www.ncwaudubon.org).

Later this year we will be collaborating with Audubon Washington as they host a photo contest for the Sagebrush Songbird Survey project. The details are still being developed but this will offer another opportunity for photographers to share their photos of the amazing birds found in North Central Washington. Future photo contests that are held by NCW Audubon will build on the lessons and experience we gained from the 2018 contest.



Grand Prize Winner  
Cedar Waxwing with a berry  
by Peter Bauer, Winthrop



Adult Enthusiast First Place  
Short-eared Owl  
by Ken Longley

# Award-Winning Photos at Bird Fest

by Mark Oswood, Wenatchee

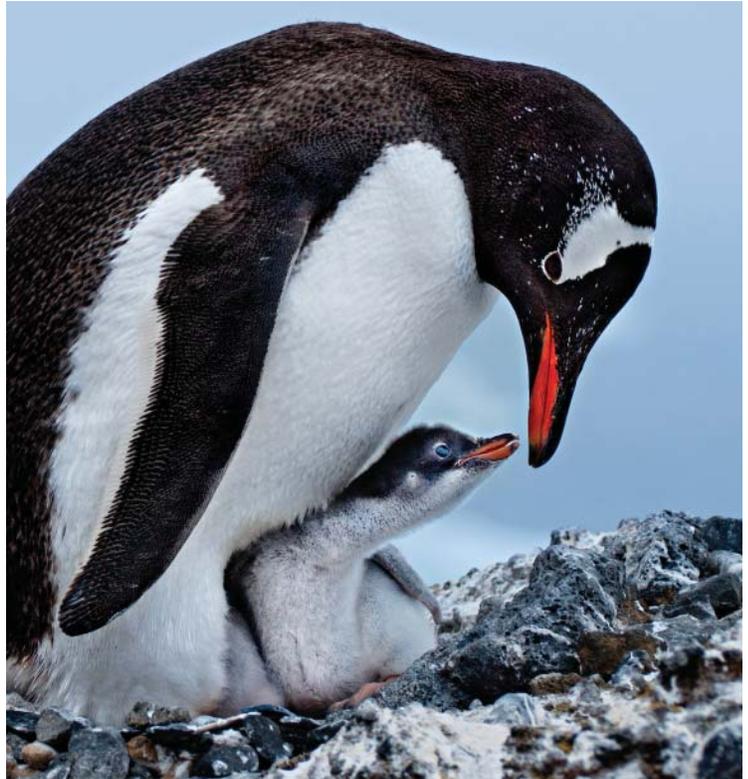
As part of Leavenworth's Spring Bird Fest, NCW Audubon will be displaying winning bird photos from the National Audubon Society's 2017 Photography Awards, alongside the winning photos from our own Chapter's 2018 Bird Photo Contest.

You can see these photos in the Sun Room of the River Haus, Bird Fest Headquarters, Saturday and Sunday, May 19 and 20 from ten til two. There are twenty photographs, all large prints, all a gift for the visual cortex of your brain.

The National Audubon Society photos were selected from more than 5,500 entries and published in the Summer 2017 issue of Audubon Magazine. Our NCWAS photos were selected from 116 entries and will travel throughout NCW in the coming months.

In addition to the photo exhibit, we'll have stocks of take-aways, including our Common Birds of NCW poster and the Summer 2017 issue of Audubon magazine (featuring the award -winning photos you'll see at the exhibit). And we'll have mini-exhibits on climate change and Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

River Haus is located at 347 Division Street in Leavenworth on a nine-acre nature preserve overlooking the Wenatchee River. For more information on Bird Fest, see [www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.org/](http://www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.org/).



Grand Prize Winner, Deborah Albert  
National Audubon Society  
Photography Awards

## Methow Wildlife Area Cooperative Nest Box Project

by Julie Hovis, Winthrop

On March 31 the Methow Conservancy teamed up with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to help with a nest box project on several units of the Methow Wildlife Area in Okanogan County. The work party included Methow Conservancy Educational Program Director Mary Kiesau, 22 Methow Conservancy volunteers, Methow Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Nick Brasier, WDFW volunteer Julie Hovis, and Patrick Hannigan, the owner of Nice Nests in Twisp.

The weather was good and within a few hours 51 existing songbird boxes along Bear Creek, Gunn Ranch, and Rendezvous roads had been cleaned out or replaced, and eighteen new songbird and three new kestrel/owl boxes had been installed on the Cottonwood property between Winthrop and Twisp. Mary reported all the songbird boxes along Gunn Ranch and Rendezvous roads were completely filled with House Wren sticks and had been useless nest sites for many years. That is why it is so important to clean out songbird nest boxes before the nesting season.

I plan to monitor as many boxes as possible to determine species occupancy, nesting success, and future management needs. My findings will go to the Methow Wildlife Area and to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Nest Watch Program - <https://nestwatch.org/>.



Mountain Bluebird  
photo by Darlene Dooley  
Adult Enthusiast Honorable Mention  
NCW Audubon 2018 Photo Contest

# Fodder from the Feeder

Spring - what a glorious time of the year! With so many birds at the feeders now, it is hard to decide what to write about. They all capture my heart in their own distinct ways, and each day a new species seems to be flocking into view. Just the other day the White-crowned Sparrows descended, and the House Wrens started their singing and stick gathering. We are still seeing small flocks of Clark's Nutcrackers attacking the suet, and the Tree Swallows are assessing every house for potential. I finally put my hummingbird feeders out and instantly saw a Calliope, followed closely by a Rufous Hummingbird.

So, I thought I would investigate Dark-eyed Juncos as we have had a very large influx of these guys this year. Turns out they are one of the most common birds of North America, with an estimated total population of 630 million; another source quoted the breeding population estimate at 200 million. They are numerous and widespread for sure.

Juncos are the snowbirds of North America, appearing in the east and southeast of the U.S. in the winter, and retreating north in the spring. Some stay in areas year-round, as I believe we have noted here in the valley, but especially in the eastern U.S. Cornell Lab states that the population has declined 1.4% per year from 1966 to 2015, a cumulative decline of 50% overall, so I am happy to see so many around this year. There are six subspecies. My yard gets the Oregon subspecies. Slate-colored can be found in Washington too. They all have white outer tail feathers noticeable as they hop up to catch insects in the air or as

by Karen Mulcahy, Winthrop

they fly away (apparently the females prefer the males with the largest amount of white showing). They are not a particularly showy bird, but their pink bills are pretty nice.

That reminds me of why I noticed them this year. Usually they hop around under the feeders, foraging for the seeds displaced by other birds. But this year, they were up on all the seed feeders far more frequently, and flying at the suet feeders, pulling seeds from the blocks of lard. It took them awhile to figure out how to get ahold of the hanging suet, but after a few tries they mastered the skill. Perhaps they were super-hungry because there was still so much snow on the ground. I had just never noticed it before ... maybe I was intrigued as they were the most numerous visitors to the feeders in the early spring. Now there are so many species visiting and their actions are less notable. I did see two Pygmy Nuthatches chase a junco off the suet. The pygmies are fierce defenders of their food.

Sniffing around bird sites I found another interesting tidbit about our juncos. Melissa Sherwood of Washington reported a Dark-eyed Junco nesting in a birdhouse! Cornell Lab stated this could not be, but when she gave them a picture they did some research. The only historical recording they could find of this behavior was over 100 years ago, and it was two instances of Dark-eyed Juncos nesting in old woodpecker cavities. Melissa is the first person in over a century to witness this! I am going to keep my eyes on my birdhouses to see if any of these guys pick a house to nest in. And I will get a picture. Stay tuned.

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## Native Plant Society Walks In Three Counties

**May 11 – Goat Wall** with Eric Burr and Margrit Broennimann. Okanogan County. 9:00 am. Meet at the Mazama Store. Call 996-3101 or email burrski@methonet.com to register.

**May 11 – Tibbetts Mountain** with Cindy Luskus. Chelan County. Meet at the Penny Road park and ride at Old Station at 9:00 am. Limited to ten walkers. Register with Cindy at 888-0245 or cluksus@nwi.net.

**May 18 – Lake Creek and Andrews Creek** for *Lewisia tweedyi*. Okanogan County. Meet at the Town Trailhead in Winthrop at 8:00 am. Limited to ten walkers. Register with Caryl Campbell bearfight@methonet.com

**May 18 – Moses Coulee** with Aaron Rosenblum. Douglas County. Meet at the Waterville Courthouse at 8:00 am. Register with Aaron at 423-5990 or arosenblum@fostercreekcd.org.

**June 1 – Big Valley.** Okanogan County. Meet at the Big Valley parking lot outside of Winthrop at 11:00 am. Limited to twelve walkers. Register with Rosalee De La Foret at 557-3660 or rosalee@herbalremediesadvice.org.

from the Native Plant Society



Steershead, *Dicentra uniflora*  
photo by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley

# Gems That Fly

## Okanogan Highlands Alliance offers butterfly field trip

article and photo by Julie Vanderwal,  
Okanogan Highlands

Butterfly season is upon us! Butterflies are the quintessential symbol of renewal through change. In a world that is rapidly changing, the Highland Wonders educational series provides opportunities for our community to learn more about the natural world, with the hope that these experiences may renew our enthusiasm to take care of the rich biodiversity around us.

On June 17, renowned naturalist David Droppers will lead us on a butterfly tour through the Okanogan Highlands, with the help of two butterfly aficionados from the Methow, Joyce Bergen and Cheryl Bellin. This exceptional butterfly team will help us observe the butterflies we encounter at each site, opening our eyes to the intricacies of butterfly biology and ecology. We will discuss the beneficial effects of pollinators, the different habitats and ecosystem elements that support the life stages of butterflies, and what can be done to protect the species that we have in our region.

As an avid naturalist, David Droppers has worked with a variety of wildlife species in an assortment of habitats, and has put his skills to work for many agencies and organizations. His background is in teaching, field research, statistics, and data management.



As an engaging public speaker and field instructor, David has given presentations on wildlife, natural history, and conservation issues for numerous organizations, from the Mountaineers and Audubon Society chapters to the Master Gardeners and gardening clubs.

David is currently engaged in a pollinator inventory project with the Forest Service, creating inventories of butterfly, moth, and bumblebee species along many popular trails along the Mountain Loop Highway in Snohomish County, as well as assessing resource use of these pollinators for potential restoration work.

Due to the nature of the outdoor event, participation is limited, and priority registration will be offered for OHA members. A waiting list will be generated on a first-come, first-serve basis. To begin or renew OHA membership and be first in line to register for the summertime events, community members can visit [www.okanoganhighlands.org/support](http://www.okanoganhighlands.org/support), or contact OHA for more information. Event details will be provided to those who register for the field trip. To sign up for this event, email [julie@okanoganhighlands.org](mailto:julie@okanoganhighlands.org) or call 476-2432.

## Spring Nature Walks in the Methow

by Mary Kiesau, Methow Conservancy

Join Mary Kiesau, the Methow Conservancy's Educational Programs Director, on a casual natural history "walk and talk" to see and learn what is happening in the natural world of the Methow. We'll look for and discuss birds and plants on all the walks but generally the morning walks focus on birds and the afternoon walks focus on flowers. These outings are perfect for people of all ages and levels of knowledge - no experience required! Children who can walk on uneven ground for two plus hours are welcome to attend with a chaperone. We'll go to a different location on each walk, and the days and times change to attempt to accommodate a variety of schedules. Mary will email attendees about five days before each walk with where to meet. These mini-classes are free but space is limited so registration is required. Contact us for more details or to reserve your spot at [mary@methowconservancy.org](mailto:mary@methowconservancy.org) or 996-2870. No dogs please.

May 9, 8:00-10:00 am, Bird Walk  
May 14, 5:00-7:00 pm, Flower Walk  
May 24, 5:00-7:00 pm, Flower Walk  
May 29, 7:00-9:00 am, Bird Walk



White-crowned Sparrow  
photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

# *May Wild Phlox*

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## North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

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

<b>1st and 3rd Wednesdays</b>	<b>Beebe Springs Bird Counts</b>	<b>NCWAS and WDFW Citizen Science. See page 4</b>
May 9 - May 29	Methow Valley Nature Walks	Birds and Flowers with the Conservancy. See page 7
May 7	Mountain Home Bird Counts	Citizen Science with CDLT. See last month's Phlox
May 11 - June 1	Wildflower Walks	Native Plant Society. See page 6
<b>May 12</b>	<b>Beebe Springs Field Trip</b>	<b>With Virginia Palumbo. See page 4</b>
<b>May 17-20</b>	<b>Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest</b>	<b>Celebrate Spring in NCW! See page 5 and last month's Phlox</b>
<b>May 26</b>	<b>Columbia River field trip</b>	<b>Bridgeport and Brewster area. See page 4</b>
<b>May 26-28</b>	<b>Wenas Audubon Campout</b>	<b>A celebration of Spring! See page 1</b>
<b>May 31</b>	<b>Twisp Area Hotspots Field Trip</b>	<b>With Mark Johnston. See page 4</b>
June 17	Butterflies in the Okanogan Highlands	Learn about these flying gems. See page 7



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Visit the NCW Audubon Society website for updates on these and other events  
[www.ncwaudubon.org](http://www.ncwaudubon.org)