



Enraptured with Raptor Migration?

Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival September 17

Volume 45 #1 September 2011

by Bridget Egan, Wenatchee

North Central Washington is home to some of the most amazing species in the northwest, but many people don't know it is also a major pit stop for hawks flying from Alaska to the southwest and Mexico. September 17th is a great opportunity to learn about this amazing migration, and get face-to-face with raptors of all shapes and sizes.

Join the Methow Valley Ranger District, North Central Washington Audubon Society, North Cascades Basecamp, and HawkWatch International for the second Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival! It is an interactive event that will take place at Memorial Park in Pateros on September 17th from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. This family-friendly festival combines free activities in Pateros with trips to the Chelan Ridge Raptor Migration Site to learn about and celebrate raptors as they journey to their winter territories. Attendees can also go on a guided birding trip along the Columbia. Additionally, the always popular WSU Raptor Club will be there with their raptors. The WSU students will share the stories of each bird and allow visitors to see them up close and personal.

During the day, shuttles will run from Pateros to Chelan Ridge where bird lovers of all levels will be able to see raptors like Sharp-shinned Hawks as they are banded and released. Chelan

Ridge sits 5,675 feet above sea level along the flyway for migrating raptors like the rare-in-Washington Broad-winged Hawk. Biologists who live at the Ridge during the migration season will offer insight on how raptors are studied and tracked. This is an amazing experience with environmental education and interpretation conducted by on-site educators and Forest Service personnel.

Reservations and information for field trips and shuttles to Chelan Ridge can be found on NCW Audubon's website, www.ncwaudubon.org/events.htm and on our Facebook page. Or call 509-731-4790 or email chelanridgefestival@gmail.com

On September 18, North Cascades Basecamp will host a talk about the Southern Cross Peregrine Project by Bud Anderson, Director and Founder of the Falcon Research Group. Cost for this event is \$10. Bud's presentation will highlight researchers' efforts to track Peregrine Falcons between Chile and the Arctic. After the talk, there will be a free guided hike in the Harts Pass area looking for migratory raptors. Due to space limitations, RSVP is appreciated for both events. For more information, visit www.northcascadesbasecamp.com/. For registration call the North Cascades



Rough-legged Hawk from WSU Raptor Club at 2010 Festival photo by Teri J Pieper

Basecamp at 509-996-2334 or email info@NorthCascadesBasecamp.com.

The Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival coincides with the peak of southbound raptor migration at Chelan Ridge - the best place in Washington to view this journey. According to Kent Woodruff, a biologist for the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests, "The Chelan Ridge project is good news for hawks, which in some cases still face challenges for survival. It's also great for nature enthusiasts who like to see animals in the wild doing what comes naturally and see scientists at work trying to learn more about the raptors as they migrate south to avoid winter." The 2010 festival drew several hundred people who were delighted to see hawks up close, build nest boxes, and spend a day leaning all about raptors.

Join us for the 2011 festival!

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



Gloria Spiwak attended the WSU Raptor Club presentation at the North Cascades Basecamp last week and sent us this photo of a Barn Owl they shared with the audience. This same owl might be seen at the Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival.



Read about this Common Nighthawk family in Jenny Graevell's story on page 4

North Central Washington Audubon Society Wild Phlox Subscription Form

- Subscribe to NCW Audubon Wild Phlox One Year, Nine Issues \$15
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- Donation: I would like to support NCW Audubon's programs of education and conservation. Enclosed is my additional donation of \$_____
- Please do NOT acknowledge my donation in the Wild Phlox
- Memorial in the name of _____

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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.

How can it be almost September? Does anyone know where the summer went? Maybe it just seems short due to cool wet weather early on and big events in my life too. I have to say it's been a good one full of lots of great birding opportunities and lots of work too.

I was fortunate that a woman just up the road a bit from my house called to invite me to photograph nesting birds at her place. What a treat to see a nest full of Cedar Waxwings at eye level! And if that wasn't enough, she called a couple days later to say that an *Empidonax* flycatcher pair had built a nest above her back door! After speculation on our part, we shared the images with 'experts' who deemed the flycatchers to be of the Western type – most likely Pacific-slope Flycatchers but possibly Cordilleran. The Pac Slope species exists mostly in the mountains of Washington and other west coast states while the Cordilleran is mostly in the Rocky Mountain states however some folks say both could be in the Methow. It was a good learning experience. One of my friends is insistent that we ought to learn the *Empidonax* group so that my bird lists don't show *empid sp* instead of Hammonds, Dusky, Pacific-slope, Least, etc.



Probably a
Pacific-slope Flycatcher



Cedar Waxwings

Other birds that present me with identification questions are the immature hummingbirds coming to our feeders. Last year visiting ornithologists told us we were seeing and hearing Anna's Hummingbirds. Those stayed until November. This month I have seen one male Anna's that I was able to identify and I wonder if there are more.

Today, August 24th, I saw immature Harlequin Ducks on the Chewuch River. I was surprised to see them, thinking they had probably all moved downstream to the ocean by now. Last week in the North Cascades two of us saw a huge flock of Black Swifts! No doubt, they were migrating. Various swallows and Canada Geese are in flocks preparing to go somewhere. Common Nighthawks are also in big groups. In Tonasket last week, when the temperature was well into the 90's I saw a Clark's Nutcracker in town! It seemed out of place this time of year. And Eurasian Collared-doves are all over the place. Is there any town in Washington that doesn't have them now? This species was introduced into the Bahamas in the 1970's and has spread throughout this country. There's always something to pique your curiosity in the world of birds.

We Need You At the Salmon Festival

article and photo by Mark Oswood,
Wenatchee

Traditionally, NCWAS and Barn Beach Reserve have staffed a booth at the Salmon Festival. The main activity at our booth is our Analog Birding Simulation ("What's That Bird?"). We put realistic "birds" — life-size, carved (in wood), and painted — in trees and shrubs. We turn kids (and often entire families) loose with kid-sized binoculars and a modest checklist of bird possibilities. The "field guide" is provided by a laminated large sheet of pictures of several dozen birds.

We have been surprised and gratified at the success of the Analog Birding Simulation. Finding and identifying our "birds" puts children of all ages and adults on an equal footing (unlike games explicitly designed for young children). Very often, entire families disappear into "the woods" — helping one another and racing back to our booth to check the "field guide."

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! NO EXPERIENCE (or birding skills) NEEDED (truly). You will have fun (for sure)!

Saturday and Sunday, 1 & 2 October, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (9:30 a.m. prep and orientation)

Please contact Mark Oswood at (preferred) moswood@nwi.net or call 509-662-9087 or send note to NCWAS. Please provide your contact information and times/days you'd like to volunteer. It would be good to hear from you before mid-September, to allow schedule consolidation.

And thanks!

editor's note - see related article, page 5



Nesting Common Nighthawks

article and photos by Jenny Graevell, East Wenatchee

My husband and his work crew noticed the bird at their work site at the Alcoa switchyard in July. They had thought the bird was just roosting, as the site did not contain 'a nest' but was just a scrape in the gravel, however the bird was very loyal to the one particular site. Checking with field guides we learned that only the female incubates the eggs. So, the guys started watching. They believe the first egg hatched around the 24th of July. The second egg, hatched the day after. The birds are born semi-precocial; eyes opened, covered in down and able to leave the nest soon after hatching; however they need to be fed by the parents for about three weeks. The mother did perform distraction displays if she felt threatened while incubating. This behavior has not been witnessed after the birds hatched. If you look closely at the first photo you can see the remaining eggshell from the hatch in the background of her bill. Both parents feed the chick regurgitated insects at dawn and dusk. The mother remained with the chick throughout the daylight hours.

I understand that they fledge at about three weeks, and then stay only briefly with their parents before joining flocks of migrating birds south all the way to South America. Some birds fly all the way to Northern Argentina. Imagine doing that at a month old!



And More Baby Birds!

article and photo by Gretchen Rohde

Summer birding can be hard work, with many mystery sounds that need to be tracked down. That's because there are babies out there, and we've had a busy summer at Vaga Dell Ranch in our barn, wetlands and forest.

There have been the usual faking Killdeer, staggering baby Robins, and swooping swallows, but lots of new species this year. Here are my favorites: While walking to the mailbox in mid July, I heard some very strange hissing, begging sounds. The sounds seemed to be coming from the ground, and then moved up two Ponderosa Pine trees. I honed in on a pair of young Barred Owls, who were making their way back up the tree by hopping from branch to branch. A few days later, when I returned with my camera, they were making short flights.

Last summer there was some late nest building by a pair of Osprey, and they returned this year nice and early to try again. They added to their nest, which sways on the top of a dead tree near the wetlands. When I scoped out the nest in early August, there were two rather large babies hunkered down inside, only popping up when an adult landed with food.

And finally, we had a most inconvenient nest of Cedar Waxwings in an elderberry bush hanging over the middle of our driveway. Just like the field guide said, their nest was in the crotch of a few branches, 6 feet off the ground – just about where any truck or car could wipe them out. So out came the traffic cones and a sign, "Baby Birds in Nest, Stay Right". They never made a sound, stealthy until they fledged a few weeks later.

It's been a good summer at our place. I still have hope that the Sora pair I've heard for months will produce something exciting. If not this year, maybe next!



Barred Owl branchling

Watershed Art Collection has new home at Barn Beach Reserve

by Gretchen Rohde and Jeff Parsons, Leavenworth

In 2000, three local professional artists, Gretchen Daiber, Cynthia Neely and Gretchen Rohde, joined forces with environmental educator and sculptor, Tony Angell, to put on a series of artist for nature events in the Wenatchee River Watershed. The non-profit organization, named "Watershed Art," had a mission to create an awareness and emotional connection to the unique cultural and natural history of the Wenatchee River Watershed through ART.

Under the aegis of Watershed Art, fifteen internationally recognized nature artists and writers came to Leavenworth in 2001 to chronicle the watershed. They stayed at Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat as the guests of avid environmentalist and art patron, Harriet Bullitt.

In 2002, Watershed Art organized two month-long shows in Leavenworth and Wenatchee to exhibit the artwork that was inspired or produced during the 2001 events, a total of over 200 pieces. After the shows, the proceeds from artwork sales were used to purchase 22 pieces of

art representing each artist and discipline, creating the "Watershed Art Collection."

Of special interest to Audubon members is an original painting of a Clark's Nutcracker by J. Fenwick Lansdowne, a basalt sculpture of a Kestrel preening by Tony Angell, a Northern Spotted Owl photograph by Art Wolfe, and Robert Bateman's White-headed Woodpecker painting (a life bird for him in 2001).

This collection now hangs in its permanent home in the Lorene Young Audubon House at Barn Beach Reserve, 250 Twelfth Street, Leavenworth. You are all invited to an Open House on Sunday, September 25, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. to revisit (or visit for the first time) this magnificent art collection representing the Wenatchee River Watershed. Donations in any amount are welcomed for gallery lighting to be installed in time for a Ten Year Anniversary Watershed Art Reunion that will take place in September 2012. For more information, please call 509-548-0181 or visit barnbeachreserve.org/events



Celebrating the Return of the Salmon

Thousands of people of all ages and cultures come to the Wenatchee River Salmon Festival each year to celebrate the return of the salmon to our northwest rivers. The rivers that are home to the salmon also provide sustenance for birds, frogs, salamanders, foxes, deer, bugs, bears and countless trees, bushes, and flowers. We depend on these same waters to provide electricity for our homes, irrigation for our crops, livelihoods for our fishermen, and a place for our families to play, picnic, camp and hike.

The Wenatchee River Salmon Festival is a four-day natural resource education event held each fall to celebrate the return of the salmon to the Wenatchee River. The Festival is held on the grounds of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery, located at the mouth of the scenic Icicle Canyon near Leavenworth, Washington.

Our theme this year is "Salmonfest Willkommen!". An exciting menu of hands-on activities and "edutainment"

gives visitors a unique opportunity to discover and appreciate the complexities of the natural world and the significance of salmon to people of the northwest. Students from schools throughout north central Washington visit the Festival during the two special school days. On Saturday and Sunday the event attracts thousands of visitors from around the northwest.

The Festival brings people, natural resources, education, entertainment and science together in a non-commercial, non-political package that benefits many. Since its 1991 inception, the Festival has

remained true to its natural resource education mission while updating and augmenting activities to keep the messages fresh, timely and engaging. In response, the event has become nationally recognized for its educational excellence.

editor's note - see related article on page 3

Wenatchee River Salmon Festival
October 1 - 2
Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery
www.salmonfest.org/
509-548-6662 extension 271

Notes from Mazama

by Bob Spiwak, Mazama

Summer, such as it has been, is coming to an end. At least, it says so on the calendar. We had, last week, a morning of 41 degrees which is a mere 9 above freezing. Three days later, either a heavy fog or humidity dome swept through leaving a heavy coat of dew on the car, and soaking a neighbor's hay he was planning to rake the next day.

Today, the 22nd, there is a forecast for showers, which is down from "rain" yesterday. It's been a long time since anything wet fell from the sky other than that from birds flying overhead. We have had a bear bathing, we suspect, in our pond although we've not seen it. The neighbors next door have. "It was dripping wet," said one who claimed it to be not all that big, which contradicts another who said it was very large. I do not doubt that there was a bear in the pond as the nearest water is a quarter mile to the river south of here, or a creek and pond to the east the same distance.

Two of our early season regulars have reappeared after months of absence: a lone California Quail, all that my wife has seen of the group of five that wintered over, and a single chipmunk. When we were feeding birds over the winter (which ended here in early June) there were scads of the little chippers. When the free meals abated, so did the rodents, other than one squirrel who apparently shares our carton-cluttered porch with a tiny green frog. The cartons are for smooshing and recycling, and the resident Kermit must regard them as a lakeside condo.

The ongoing news here is a fish mystery. Two years ago we put a few perch and bass in the landlocked, spring-fed pond for mosquito abatement. We saw no fish after the ice left. This year, when the thaw came, there was a creature feeding therein. It was not sighted until one evening in July when it broke water to catch a bug. Early in August we were on the deck and counted seven fish, either bass or perch. And, there was a torpedo-shaped creature Ms. Gloria identified as a trout. There was only one day we saw both kinds of fish. Now we are back to the mysterious "creature" and no sign of the other seven. Perhaps the bear got them; the pond is quite shallow right now.

The hummingbirds are all but gone, here and there are broken egg shells on the ground of other avian species. The dirty-rotten-crummy deer are still feasting on the buds of daylilies and oriental lilies before 99 percent of them even have a chance to show color. It's enough to make a guy want to move to town. Oh never mind, the deer are worse in town.

Ancient Eyes

Seven friends meet, mid nowhere
In the Highlands

Seeking Great Gray
How is it the owl shows up-here?

Private creatures, nocturnal
Feathers soft, silent, maybe tonight

Evening passes, elk sift among the trees
Coyotes call, evening plans no longer secret

Twilight nearly steals off, yet
Wood pewees call and call

Madeline -five- collects ditchline treasures
Says let's stand by the fence to see better

Spooky whistle of the Poorwill now
Whitetails snort, bounding from secret beds so close

Just two three cars pass
Hear em half a mile away our road wandering freely

Night falls black shadows slip forward in the tree crowns
This is it! Two owlets call for food

Darkness overwhelms all efforts to see
Slow walk back truck full of disappointment

Pull away, still asking please
The headlights, last hope

Stop! The Great Gray poised at field's edge
Hunts from a weathered wood post

Those Ancient Eyes calmly
Acknowledge our presence.

by Todd Thorn



Madeline, of Okanogan County, searches for Great Gray Owls.
Torre Stockard is the dot on the road in the background.
photo by Julie Ashmore

Exploring the Okanogan Highlands

article and photo by Teri J Pieper

The Common Loons at Lost Lake lost both of their young to Bald Eagles this summer. It was pretty sad. As a bird lover, it's hard to reconcile this in my head. When we visited last month, we did get looks at a chick but it was gone by the next morning. The adults remained and were joined by another loon while we were there. There are lots of other birds in the area including Spotted Sandpipers with young, Williamson's Sapsuckers, Barred Owls and many more. I think we counted 55 species for a weekend trip without working too hard at it.

We were lucky enough to be there when the Okanogan Highlands Alliance was hosting a native plant walk at their property on the south end of the lake. George Thornton told us about the wetlands and uplands habitats and what makes them unique and the importance of protecting the land, especially the wetlands for nesting birds.

And that evening some of the locals took us out to see Great Gray Owls! Apparently there are at least three nesting pairs in the Highlands, all located on private land. We were able to see them from a county road. Other highlights of the evening included a pair of elk and a Swainson's Hawk.



What's Happening at Barn Beach Reserve?

by Gail Roberts, Plain

September 23, 2011, 7-9 PM
"Grrrrr...Bears!"

Join us for a growling-good evening! The subject of bears, bear safety, bear protection and current information about grizzly bears in the North Cascades will be presented by wildlife biologist Gus Becker, of the Grizzly Bear Outreach Project. Gus will also talk about black bears, and how to bear-proof your home this fall as the bears are eating their ways to their winter dens. This is as much for the safety of bears as it is for people. Handouts and hands-on materials will be available. Bring the family.

November 11, 2011, 7-9 PM
"Dog Days, Raven Nights"

Twenty years ago newlyweds John and Colleen Marzluff moved to a small cabin in Maine to conduct the first extensive study of winter ecology of the Common Raven, under biologist Bernd Heinrich. From field notes and diaries, they chronicled their work to learn about this species from hands-on, challenging observations and research, while pursuing another goal of raising, training, and racing the Siberian husky sled dogs that helped with their work.

John M. Marzluff is well known for work on ecology and behavior biology of corvids and a professor of wildlife science at the University of Washington. He is also the author of four books. Colleen Marzluff is a wildlife biologist who worked as a research technician, and is an expert at raising and training sled dogs and herding dogs.

Barn Beach Reserve is located at 347 Division Street in Leavenworth. For more information on these events and other activities call 509-548-7584 or email groberts@barnbeachreserve.org

Get to Know Ohme Gardens' Native Plants

by Susan Ballinger, Wenatchee

The Wenatchee Chapter of the Native Plant Society invites the public to their first fall meeting on Thursday, Sept. 15, 6-7:30 p.m., at Ohme Gardens, 3327 Ohme Garden Road in Wenatchee. From the entrance, follow the posted signs to the shelter as our starting point. The program features Mike Short, Garden Administrator, who will take us on a guided walk of the grounds. On this informal tour, Mike will share some of the history and highlight his favorite plants. Refreshments will be served. Garden admission is free for WNPS members and all others will pay the a \$5.00 garden admissions fee. Parking is free.

Ohme Gardens features a mile of natural stone pathways which traverse the hillside gardens with breathtaking

panoramic views, towering cedars and firs, lush foliage, mesmerizing waterfalls and tranquil pools. Stone benches located throughout the grounds provide ample opportunities to savor the beauty of Ohme Gardens. Visit the website for more information and driving directions (<http://www.ohmegardens.com/index.htm>).

The Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS) is a forum for individuals who share a common interest in Washington's unique and diverse plant life. For more than 30 years WNPS has been a great source for native plant information and action. Visit the Wenatchee Chapter website at www.wnps.org/chapter_info/chapter_programs.html#wenatchee.

September Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

September 17-18	Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival	At Pateros' Memorial Park and the North Cascades Basecamp. See page 1
September 26	Methow Valley Bird Walk	Meet at Town Trailhead in Winthrop 8:00 a.m.
October 1-2	Wenatchee River Salmon Festival	see pages 3 and 5
October 8	Audubon Council of WA	Meeting of all Washington's Audubon Chapters in Moses Lake at the Grant County Fairgrounds.
October 8	Methow Salmon Celebration	Twisp Ponds and Twisp Works. Details to be announced.
October 12	Methow Valley Bird Walk	Meet at Town Trailhead in Winthrop 8:00 a.m.



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