



artwork by Steven D'Amato

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival May 4 - 6

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Each Spring, hundreds of thousands of shorebirds stop to rest and feed in the Grays Harbor estuary on their migration northward. Coming from as far south as Argentina, these Arctic-bound shorebirds are among the world's greatest migrants. Some birds travel over 15,000 miles round trip! Tens of thousands of shorebirds feed on the open mudflats in the estuary. This concentration of birds offers people a great chance to view a number of shorebird species, and with luck, to see the birds fly together in beautiful formations while trying to escape the fastest creature on earth, the Peregrine Falcon.

Grays Harbor Audubon Society, Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge, and the City of Hoquiam work with a host of other local sponsors to bring you the Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival. This event is timed to match the annual migration of hundreds of thousands of shorebirds as they pause at the Grays Harbor estuary to feed and rest before departing for their nesting grounds in the Arctic. This wildlife spectacle happens every year at Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge and other parts of Grays Harbor County. People from around the world come to view this event of hemispheric importance. The Shorebird Festival works to bring people together for this incredible natural phenomenon. A portion of revenues in excess of festival expenses

helps to fund education programs and scientific research at Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge and helps pay for continuation of construction of the boardwalk, benches and interpretive signage.

The banquet and live auction held on Saturday night are very important fundraising events for the festival. In 2011 over \$5000 was raised for the Festival. This money is used to fund the next festival and also fund the AmeriCorps position at the Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge. Thanks to all those who participated in the past! We hope to see you again this year!

Richard Crossley, author, birder and photographer, will be the keynote speaker. He will speak about *Past, Present and Future - My Life of Birding and Lessons Learned From World Travels*. Past, present and future is a story told in a Yorkshire brogue through a camera lens that loves color and art. There will be tales of lessons learned while growing up in the wild British birding scene - from travels around the world to living in Cape May. With humor and depth, it highlights the thoughts behind the revolutionary *The Crossley ID Guide* series. But, is changing **how** we look at books and birds enough? 'Heck, no!' says Richard. Come listen to his past, perhaps it will change your thoughts on the future! *The Crossley*

ID Guide will be for sale during the Festival and Richard Crossley will be available for signing books on Friday evening.

Of course seeing shorebirds is why most people participate in the Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival. Shorebird migration in Grays Harbor County begins around April 21 and continues for about 3 weeks. Festival field trip destinations include Ocean Shores, Point Grenville, Lake Quinalt and the Rain Forest, Westport and many others. Some field trips are specifically designed to help you learn to identify the confusing varieties of shorebirds. There are also a number of lectures, seminars and workshops on topics from Shorebird ID Basics to Mudflat Meals to the new National Audubon Society Birding Map of Puget Sound.

The best shorebird viewing times at Grays Harbor NWR, are during the period about two hours before to two hours after high tide. During high tide, birds are closer and more concentrated for better viewing. The peak migration typically occurs the last week in April.

For more information or to register see www.shorebirdfestival.com/index.html or contact the Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival at P.O. Box 470, Montesano, WA 98563 or 360-289-5048

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.

NCW Audubon Launches New Email System

by Marie Garrett

We are happy to announce that NCW Audubon has launched a new email system. For reasons of speed and economy, we would like to use email as our primary means for quickly contacting members about important events, volunteer opportunities, and breaking news. The Wild Phlox and our website (www.ncwaudubon.org) will continue to provide information as they have in the past.

If you would like to join our email list, please visit us on Facebook or our website to sign up. And be sure to "add us to your address book" to keep our email messages from getting tangled up in your spam filter! In the past, many of you have provided us your email address, so you may already be on our email list. But if your inbox is in a state of chronic overflow and you don't want to receive email from us, just follow the "unsubscribe" link provided in all our email messages.

North Central Washington Audubon Society Wild Phlox Subscription Form

____ Subscribe to NCW Audubon Wild Phlox One Year, Nine Issues \$15
Separate subscription to Phlox NOT needed for NAS members in good standing

____ 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 _____

Please mail check and form to Post Office Box 2934 Wenatchee, WA 98807-2934.

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Planned Giving: Please consider giving a planned gift to NCW Audubon to support our education and conservation programs for generations to come. Your charitable gift will be tax deductible. It could go to an endowment fund or to a specific program or as a gift to our general operating fund. Remember, your gift to North Central Washington Audubon will go to fund programs in North Central Washington!

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.

March is the month of not yet spring and yet, not winter anymore either. March ought to have its own season. Last week, the warm edges of the garden began to appear and I imagined that any day I'd be seeing fresh green dill poking out of the moist soil. This week, there has been new snow every day. We even had to have our road plowed again. The snow is not much fun for playing – being wet and heavy – and terrible for skiing and makes it difficult for walking. So March should be set aside for spring cleaning, income taxes and computer work. Or leave. Here in the Methow, many folks have left or have immediate travel plans.

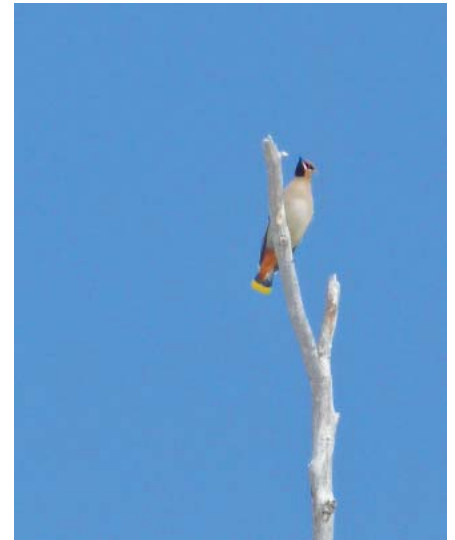
Around the weekend of March 3rd, Spring birds began to arrive at our house. First, the Say's Phoebes, then Violet-green Swallows, American Robins, Mountain and Western Bluebirds, Spotted Towhees and increasing numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos. Kent Woodruff reports a singing Townsend's Solitaire and also a migrating Swainson's Hawk! Today I saw a swallow come out of a nest box despite more wet snow and then a Cassin's Finch at the feeder! And with all these reports of Spring birds, yesterday I saw a Common Redpoll; last week I saw a large flock of Bohemian Waxwings hawking insects over the Methow River, and there are continuing rumours of a Snowy Owl in the valley – all three Winter birds. I am still waiting for my first of the year (FOY) Osprey, Turkey Vulture and House Wren.

On another bird note - how does one discourage European Starlings from coming to feeders. They've not been a problem in years past but recently have been showing up with the Red-winged Blackbirds that have been here all winter. I have quit putting out suet altogether and don't fill the sunflower feeders as often but still they come.

In other animal news, our neighbor, using a remote camera, got video footage of three cougars just down the hill from our house, maybe two hundred meters, at the most, away from here! Ken's work colleague got a photo of an ermine at their office and Ken using his remote camera, got a photo of a bobcat less than one hundred meters from the house.

In the early morning hours coyotes are singing and Great-horned Owls are hooting. While the scenery doesn't look like Spring, all signs point to its imminent arrival.

And speaking of travel, we will soon be traveling to the SE so look for the May issue of The Wild Phlox in your mailbox a little bit later than usual.



Bohemian Waxwing
photo by Teri J Pieper

Birding 101 A Methow Conservancy Class for Beginning Birders

by Mary Kiesau, Methow Conservancy

Susan Ballinger's engaging Introduction to Birding class, cosponsored by North Central Washington Audubon Society (NCWAS) and the Methow Conservancy, is perfect for beginning birders. Participants in this workshop will be introduced to the basics of bird biology; learn about bird behavior and habitats; view images of common birds of our area, and learn how to use field characteristics as an aid to bird identification. The presentation also includes a hands-on time to review the use of field guides and binoculars.

Susan will also cover field etiquette, and give us practical tips for comparing and choosing binoculars and audio and technological tools.

There is a follow-up field trip on Saturday June 16th for class registrants where we will help you identify common birds in a great local habitat. You can practice your skills, learn from others, and meet others who love to bird. The field trip will be led by Susan with additional help from

other local birders. Details on where to go will be provided at the Friday evening session.

Susan Ballinger, a lifelong educator and a biologist, has years of experience in the field and in the classroom. She's well known for developing the Wenatchee elementary schools' science field experiences, including the fifth grade "Shrub Steppe'n up Saddle Rock" outdoor education program, and most recently, she created and taught the "Wenatchee Naturalist," a comprehensive 12-week program. Susan's energy and enthusiasm is contagious and will leave you with a shared experience that could make you a birder for life!

Registration is required in advance. Contact Mary Kiesau, Methow Conservancy Program Coordinator at 996-2870 or info@methowconservancy.org to register or ask questions. Details can also be found at www.methowconservancy.org.

June 15, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Optional field trip to a local birding
hotspot, June 16, 7:30 am - 10 am
\$35

Remembering Dennis Garrity

by Bridget Egan, Wenatchee

Dennis Garrity, one of our North Central Washington Audubon members and husband of former Board member Jeanie Garrity, died on February 7th in Wenatchee. Dennis and Jeanie moved to Wenatchee in 1998 after they retired from teaching. Dennis was a true outdoors man and loved birding with Jeanie, hiking with his dog Ponce, and contributing to local conservation efforts. Dennis was an active participant in many birding trips, including the Upper Basin Birders monthly bird counts around Fish Lake and Lake Wenatchee, and Dan Stephens' annual treks to the Waterville Plateau. His interest in birds and habitat led him to work with great dedication on conservation issues, and he served as board member and vice-president of the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust. Dennis loved so many aspects of the outdoors: travel, skiing, photography, hiking, fly fishing, even volunteering on weed pulls, and he always incorporated bird watching. It's hard to summarize what he meant to so many, but Teri Pieper speaks for all of us when she observes, "He was one of those people that I wish I had more time with."

Audubon Board member Penny Tobiska knew Dennis both from the Cascade Unitarian Fellowship and a book discussion group where she remembers his "caring attitude and warm heart." Dennis' love of learning and ideas made him a valued discussion partner. Says Penny, "Dennis had intelligent, well-considered comments, often influenced by his vast knowledge of history, and people always listened to his insights. I value Dennis for his love of ideas and his respect for the people who discussed them."

Heather Murphy, who volunteered as an Upper Basin Birder with Dennis, celebrates "his gift for camaraderie and kindness, his thirst for knowledge, his sense of wonder when we shared a new observation. AND his wicked sense of humor." When the UBB met on March 1st, they dedicated the day's observations to their friend's memory and Heather was inspired by one special sighting. She writes, "I had a 'Dennis' moment with one of our birds at Napeequa/Tall Timber Station #12. I took the extra time to investigate dipper sounds coming from below the bridge. This required my scrambling up on top of a five foot snowbank and then sliding down between said snowbank and the bridge, getting to the river under it. There I got to see two dippers in courtship. They were running at each other with their wings outstretched, and singing their songs and then chirping their

river sounds. I watched for fifteen minutes or so, and very much enjoyed taking the time to understand these earliest of passerine breeders. And of course, we've known about the dipper nest under that bridge, but to see the pair dancing, singing, and doing tummy-slams was a wonder. We'll be watching and remembering Dennis as the nesting season advances. 'Here's to you, my friend, Mr. Dennis Garrity!'"

It seems that many of us were touched by Dennis' smile, warmth, and sense of humor. Rachel and Arnie Scown first met Dennis and Jeanie on a weed pull for The Nature Conservancy. Over the years, they came to know Dennis and his love for "sharing books, wine, homemade salsa, and his favorite bluegrass music." Rachel notes, "I miss his easy smile, calm demeanor, subtle and sometimes wicked humor, and the many ways he shared his passion for birding."

Mark Oswood had this to say about Dennis, "There are people who are a boon, whose goodwill goes hunting needs, whose joining of a gathering foments good cheer, whose trail is signed by markers that read - At this spot, a kindness was done."

As a Land Trust employee, I, too, knew Dennis as the man who could make anyone smile. He was also passionate about preserving our local

resources. He and Jeanie helped me when I first started at the Land Trust as the membership coordinator. For several weekends, not all of them warm and sunny, they met me in the early morning at the farmer's market to talk to people about CDLT. I enjoyed those early mornings with him, Jeanie, and Ponce very much--and I learned so much about communicating my passion to others by watching Dennis. Dennis believed so strongly in the work he did for CDLT that it rubbed off on those around him - even strangers.

Those who knew him will remember him while birding with friends, while sharing jokes and stories with loved ones, or while wandering the local hills with four-legged friends.

Or, as Rachel Scown perfectly put it, "To remember Dennis is to smile."

Dennis' memorial celebration is March 31, 1-3 at the First Methodist Church at Miller and Washington in Wenatchee. Contributions may be made to the Chelan Douglas Land Trust (www.cdlandtrust.org) and American Rivers (www.amrivers.org).



Dennis, birding in the Methow, 2009
photo by Teri J Pieper

Save the Date! Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest May 17-20

by Gail Roberts, Plain

Celebrate nature and the spring migration at the 10th Anniversary of the Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest! Field trips galore, presentations, art shows, lectures, and great entertainment are highlights of Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest!

Special guests are Keynote Speaker Dr. David Craig of Willamette University, conservation biologist/author Dr. Thor Hanson (FEATHERS: Evolution of a Natural Miracle), guest artist Ed Newbold, singer/songwriter Michael Carlos who will lead bird walks and entertain at the Songbird Concert, and Sarvey Wildlife Center in Arlington returning with live owls, hawks, and eagles, and an excellent educational message. Bird Fest Central is back at the downtown gazebo with entertainment on Saturday. Thanks to new partner Team Naturaleza/Dancing with Birds, there is a stronger Latino connection this year.

Event programs will be available after April 7 online (www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com) and at many Bird Fest sponsors, partners, nature centers, REI, and USFS

offices throughout the Northwest. General Registration for field trips and events begins May 1.

Bird Fest is a partnership of North Central Washington Audubon Society, Wenatchee River Institute, Wenatchee River Ranger District, Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce, North Cascades National Park Service Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington State Parks, the Wenatchee Chapter of Washington Native Plant Society, Team Naturaleza, and Icicle Arts.

Arrival Haiku

March Robin warbles
his cheery homecoming call.
I'm home, Dear. I'm home.

by Gloria Piper Robinson

Okanogan Highlands Alliance Presents: Highland Wonders

by Julie Ashmore, Okanogan Highlands

Bighorn Sheep of the Okanogan

On, April 6, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Jeff Heinlen, will bring to Highland Wonders the ecology, history and management associated with the Bighorn Sheep of Okanogan County. Jeff began working for the WDFW in 2003 after working for several years as a US Forest Service biologist in the Okanogan. He currently works on a variety of field projects throughout the Okanogan, focusing on Canada Lynx, California Bighorn Sheep, Sharp-tailed grouse, and Western Gray Squirrels. He enjoys sharing information about all wildlife to foster a deeper appreciation for them.

Wings of Beauty, with Idie Ulsh

On Friday, May 4th, Idie Ulsh will present a fast moving, fun program on butterflies! Idie will cover differences between moths and butterflies, natural history of butterflies, egg to adult development of two species, brief butterfly gardening ideas and identify many butterflies which occur in North Central WA. Through her photographs, she will also show a butterfly emerging from a chrysalid. The concept of "butterflying" is very complimentary to birding, requiring the same identification skills, but active when the birds are settled down for their mid-day naps. Roger Tory Peterson and Kenn Kaufman are among famous birders known as avid butterflyers. This program is designed for all ages and her surprise ending will delight all who are fascinated by nature. Idie's passion and enthusiasm are contagious! Idie

Ulsh is the founding president of the Washington Butterfly Association, Past President of Seattle Audubon, freelance nature photographer and an independent college counselor.

Highland Wonders presentations start at 6:30 pm. A dinner benefiting the Community Cultural Center begins at 5:00 pm, followed by the presentation with tea, coffee and desserts. The educational series is offered by Okanogan Highlands Alliance, free of charge, as part of the Community Cultural Center (CCC) of Tonasket Friday coffeehouse, at 411 S Western Ave, Tonasket, WA. For more information, contact Julie Ashmore at 433-7893 or julie@okanoganhighlands.org, or visit www.okanoganhighlands.org/education.



Pine white butterfly
photo by Tom Munson

New Study: Over Two Thirds of Fatalities of Endangered California Condors Caused by Lead Poisoning

article by Robert Johns,
American Bird Conservancy

A new study authored by San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research scientists has found that 67 percent of adult condor deaths are attributable to lead poisoning. Among the collaborators in the study were the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the University of California at Santa Cruz and Davis, The Peregrine Fund, The San Diego Zoo Global and the Phoenix Zoo.

There have been a total of 135 endangered California Condor deaths from October 1992 (the date of the first death of a condor released back into the wild as part of the condor recovery program) through December 2009. A definitive cause of death was determined for 76 of the 98 condor deaths the study looked at. Because of the condition of the carcass (and other factors that complicate definitively assigning a cause) the cause of death could not be attributed to all recovered dead condors. Lead toxicosis was the most important factor in juvenile mortality, causing 13 of 50 deaths (26 percent) and causing ten of 15 deaths in adults (67 percent). Trash ingestion was the most important mortality factor in nestlings, causing eight of 11 deaths (73 percent).

The report states that “The mortality factors thought to be important in the decline of the historic California Condor population, particularly lead poisoning, remain the most important documented mortality factors today. Without effective mitigation, these factors can be expected to have the same effects on the sustainability of the wild populations as they have in the past.”

“Although lead toxicosis from spent ammunition still threatens the survival of the California Condor, one of our most iconic species, the good news is that solutions are available in the form of nontoxic ammunition. We can make this a win-win situation if we choose to,” said Dr. Bruce A. Rideout, lead author of the study and Director, Wildlife Disease Laboratories, Institute for Conservation Research San Diego Zoo Global.

“In all likelihood, many more condors would likely have died from lead poisoning had it not been for the fact that

all wild condors in California are normally captured twice each year, tested for lead poisoning and then treated if necessary,” said Darin Schroeder, Vice-President for Conservation Advocacy for American Bird Conservancy (ABC), one of the nation’s leading bird conservation organizations.

The massive effort to save the California Condor was initiated in 1982 when the remaining 22 wild birds were captured in a last-ditch effort to save the species. Of the 390 condors that exist today, 210 are in the wild, with 118 in California, 73 in Arizona and 19 in Mexico.

ABC has analyzed almost 500, mostly peer-reviewed studies, and determined that the source of the vast majority of lead poisoning of birds and other wildlife is lead ammunition from hunting. Birds either consume lead pellets when they mistake them for grit that they used to help digest their food, or when they scavenge on the remains of animals hunted with lead shot or bullets. A single ingested lead pellet can cause a slow and agonizing death for many birds. Previous studies have estimated that between 8 and 10 million birds die from lead poisoning each year including Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, hawks, ravens, vultures, Mourning Doves and Common Loons.

“Here we have another peer-reviewed study with independent scientists confirming that lead is needlessly and tragically killing protected wildlife. **While the nation has removed the lead from paint, gasoline, children’s toys, water pipes, and even car wheel weights, we are still using toxic ammunition,”** Schroeder said. **“Acceptable lead-free alternatives exist, and we need every hunter in America to make the switch to save the lives of countless non-game birds.”**

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. ABC acts by safeguarding the rarest species, conserving and restoring habitats, and reducing threats, while building capacity in the bird conservation movement.



California Condor
photo from US Fish and Wildlife Service

Notes from Mazama

It's March 6th. The month has come in with warmish weather in the 40s earlier in the week and with a little luck it may get there again. This morning it was 19 degrees and as the sun rose so did the wind. Not like a lion, but enough velocity to shake the trees.

We had our first pair of Oregon juncos a few days ago. While others have seen robins, none have been noted here yet. The usual complement of Steller's Jays, chickadees in two flavors and a few nuthatches continues. I heard a Northern Saw-whet Owl in the clear, still air of last night, visually augmented by two extremely bright planets in the southern sky. The woodpeckers and flickers, of course, are omnipresent.

The quail herd seems to be down to five now but it is hard to say for certain as their numbers at any given time increase to six, or show up as only a trio. They are well fed and whether it is their numbers or the size of their clump as they peck and scratch, they are unbothered by other birds.

The snow depth is down to about twenty inches and wind and sun keep shrinking it daily. The oft-written-about pond now has increased to about sixty feet in length, with the two separate puddles united a week ago and steadily growing. Spring is in the air and on the water. Once completely thawed it is about 60 yards long tapering at its source to a fjord-like configuration. It was once bigger

photo and article by Bob Spiwak, Mazama

when the irrigation ditch ran through it, but the ditch has been shut down in the name of salmon-saving even though there were never any in it. The constant fresh water inflow enabled us to keep a school of 21 hatchery fish for three years. Now there may be a holdover bass or two that may have survived the winter in the spring fed environs.

We had a pair of Mourning Doves that seems to have diminished by half. The big news, literally and figuratively was the appearance of a trio of Trumpeter Swans that landed in a backwater of the Methow River and hung around beyond the time it took to get some photos



Native Plant Society Wildflower Walks in April by Susan Ballinger, Wenatchee

Jacobsen Preserve Evening Wildflower Walk, April 19, 6:00 - 7:00 pm, Jacobsen Preserve west of Wenatchee
This hike is open to newly joined (in the last 2 years) members of either the Washington Native Plant Society or the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, maximum number of participants is 16 (We'll be in 2 groups of 8 people). Meet at the Jacobson Preserve trailhead, on Skyline Drive. Botanist Pam Camp and Biologist Susan Ballinger will lead sections of the walk, introducing the shrub-steppe flora, and talking about each organization's work on the Jacobson Preserve. Pam and Susan are WNPS Chapter Co-chairs, and Susan is a CDLT Board member. Come to get acquainted with other new members of both organizations and to try out a wonderful trail with spectacular wildflowers. Street parking is available along the western side of Skyline Drive and in six designated parking spots in the Wenatchee Racket and Athletic Club indoor facility parking lot. Moderately strenuous hiking on a trail that is narrow and rocky with the potential for unstable footing. Total elevation gain of 400 feet over a 1/2-mile loop trail. Contact Bridget Egan at CDLT phone: 667-9708

Sam Hill Wildflower Walk, April 22, 12:00 - 3:00 pm, CDLT Sam Hill property in Leavenworth. This joint WNPS and Chelan-Douglas Land Trust walk will explore the spring wildflowers at the Land Trust's Sam Hill property, which is located outside of Leavenworth on the slopes above Icicle Creek. Even though the mileage is short, the terrain is rugged and suited only for people comfortable with off-trail travel. Distance and elevation gain - two miles round-trip, 500 feet. Wear hiking boots, bring water and snacks, and dress for the weather. To register and for more information call the Land Trust office at 667-9708. Limit 12. Leaders: Don and Ann Schaechtel

Wild Horse Wind Farm Wildflower Program, April 28, 9:00 am until mid-afternoon. Location - Wild Horse Wind Farm, 18 miles east of Ellensburg. Puget Sound Energy (PSE) will present a program starting at 9:00 am at its Visitor Center on their wind farm about eighteen miles east of Ellensburg, with talks and slide shows by WNPS members and PSE personnel in the morning, and a hike on the wind farm in the afternoon to look for plants in bloom, such as *Viola trinervata*. WNPS Central Washington Chapter will have a display at the Visitors Center.

April Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

April 6	Bighorns of the Okanogan	With the Okanogan Highlands Alliance. See page 5
April 19	Walk the Jacobsen Preserve	Native Plant Society Wildflower Walk. See page 7
April 22	Where in Sam Hill?	Leavenworth. Native Plant Society Wildflower Walk. See page 7
April 28	Wildflowers and Wind Power	Native Plant Society goes to Kittitas County. See page 7
May 4	Butterflies of the Okanogan with Idie Uish	With the Okanogan Highlands Alliance. See page 5
May 4-6	Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival	Celebrate migration on the coast! See page 1
May 17-20	Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest	Save the date for this North Central Washington month's Phlox for more details Spring Bird Celebration! See page 5 and next
June 15-16	Birding 101 in the Methow	Birding for Beginners! See page 3 for details



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