



Volume 46 #2 October 2012

A Gift of the Morning

by Larry Tobiska, Wenatchee

One morning in the early summer, I was sculling up the Columbia River along the west shore just above the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia Rivers. It was a storybook morning with calm conditions and golden light of the new sun on the river. Geese and ducks swam cautiously away or occasionally took to flight as I approached. I felt I was part of the scene as the craft responded to my pull on the oars.

Moving along about fifty feet from the shore I noticed a duck that seemed to swim away and then dive beneath the surface. As I approached, the duck reappeared and again seemed to dive; but something was wrong. The duck appeared to be tangled in something and as the rowing shell passed by, the sunlight reflected from a thin line running from the beak of the duck to the water. The creature was somehow caught on a fishing line. It was in serious trouble. It was instantly clear that if help was not provided the young creature was doomed.

The situation was immediately difficult, however, because the rowing shell was narrow and I knew that if I did not hold both oars the boat would capsize. I was also afraid that the duck would drown if I approached it. The problem was to manage the tipsy boat in the current of the river, pick up the duck, disentangle it and release it without capsizing. To ignore the problem would be to allow the unfortunate animal to cruelly drown.

Approaching the duck by backing the boat downstream, I saw the duck disappear repeatedly and bob back to the surface. The boat moved directly over where the duck last dove and I heard a bump on the underside of the boat. Holding both oars with one hand, I reached around and found the wet feathers of the duck and brought it up. As I did so I saw in horror that the fishing line not only wrapped around the duck, it went through its bill and a large fishing hook was caught on part of its webbed foot which was

torn from its struggles. Suddenly the line tightened and squeezed the duck as if to cut through it. I realized that as the boat drifted downstream the line was tightening around the desperate bird because the line was caught on the bottom of the river. The duck was being constricted and dragged out of the boat and back into the river. Quickly, I rowed a few strokes upstream and attempted to maintain my position off the bank and over the place where the line was embedded while I tried to disentangle the struggling young duck. I lifted it and bit the fishing line with my teeth while holding the boat steady with one hand on both oars. Finally I was able to bite through the line. Now the duck lay wrapped in the line and temporarily exhausted on the bottom of the boat. Hastily, I rowed toward shore and lowered one leg to the bottom so the boat was stable and both hands were available.

Then I could see how totally impossible the predicament of the hapless creature was without help. The strong, nearly invisible line trussed the animal completely, passing around and through its bill, around its wings and legs and ended in the barbed rusty hook caught in its foot. As I unthreaded the line from its bill, the head and neck straightened up and the duck regarded its savior with fear and doubt from one eye. But as the line was released from the rest of its body and the grotesque hook was removed, the creature seemed to relax.

I held the small duck down to the water and it began to run across the water, flapping its wings. It still had the strength to survive. It was free to live again and it did not stop moving until it reached the other side of the river.

I began to row again. I reached the bridge pier which was my turning point and came back down the middle of the river across which the duck had flown.

I felt that I had been given a special gift. I had been permitted to contribute to the beauty of the morning.

The mission of the
North Central Washington Audubon Society
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 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.

Bird Sightings

At least two people observed an Ancient Murrelet on the Columbia River between Rocky Reach and Wells Dams during the last week of August! According to the Cornell website, these birds are the most common alcid to occur inland across North America.

Peregrine Falcons were also seen on the cliffs along the river above Entiat.

A birder in the Rendezvous area, above Winthrop, reports a White-headed Woodpecker coming to her water feature, getting a drink.

Numerous people have noticed an American White Pelican on the Columbia near its confluence with the Wenatchee River. This charismatic white bird has gotten a lot of attention.



Ancient Murrelet on the Columbia River
 photo by James Tiedeman, Entiat

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 or drop us a note and we will send you a form for a special rate introductory membership.



American White Pelican at Wenatchee
photo by Vitek Siroky, Wenatchee

As I write this in the third week of September, many of our valleys are full of smoke and breathing outside has become hazardous due to the many wildfires burning throughout our region. We all seem to be aware of how this affects us but how does it affect the animals? Are migrating birds able to see far enough ahead and change their routes? Many birds migrate at night. Are they able to go above the smoke? I imagine the raptors can negotiate the smoke but what about the songbirds – tiny warblers and hummingbirds and so on? Has anyone studied this?

In addition to the current hazards both to people and animals, we will soon see the results of the fires in the form of habitat loss and degradation. This

winter I'm sure that many folks in Chelan and Kittitas will begin to see mule deer in their yards and orchards due to the loss of winter range. In northern Douglas County, 80,000 acres of shrub steppe and farm land have burned. That doesn't even count the area around Central Ferry Canyon that burned earlier in the summer. How will that affect Sage and Sharp-tailed Grouse? What about Sage Sparrows and Loggerhead Shrikes, ground-nesting Northern Harriers and Western Meadowlarks and other shrub steppe dependent-species? These fires, while scary now will be devastating to many species in the next few years.

After that grim news, this newsletter is full of heart-warming stories to boost your spirits. Begin with Larry Tobiska's wonderful story on page one about rescuing a duck tangled in fishing line; and then look back at this year's Hawk Migration Festival; discover some great ideas for preventing bird window strikes; and learn what to do if you find an injured or sick animal. On page seven Mark Oswood reminds us about the 'small stories' that collectively tell the tales of our lives. In addition, we have our first 'letter to the editor'! And the beginnings of our 'bird sightings' column which has some very interesting sightings, to be sure! So oil up the old typewriter; drop us a line. Tell us what you think and what you saw! We love to hear from you.



Speaking of charismatic white birds, this Snowy Owl was with the WSU Raptor Club at the Hawk Migration Festival.
photo by Torre Stockard, Winthrop



Feathered feet of the Snowy Owl
photo by Torre Stockard, Winthrop

Letter to the Editor

Dear Teri,

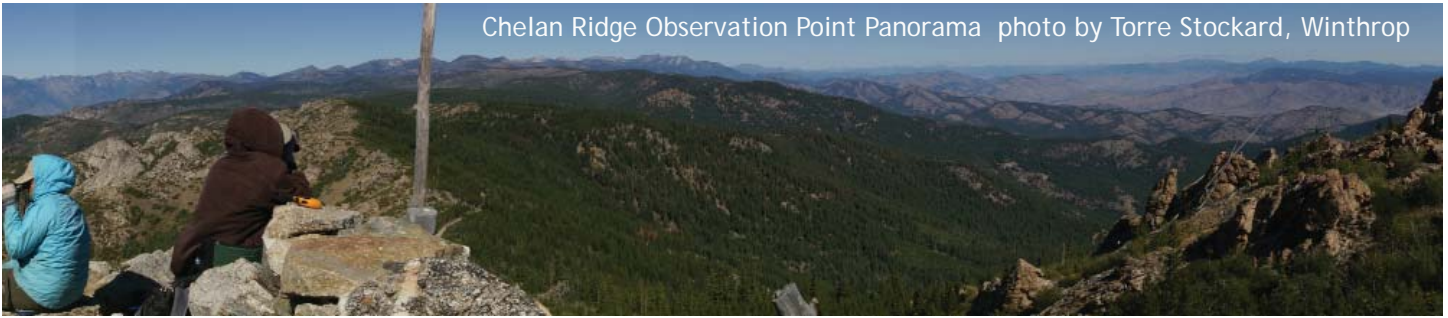
Two items of possible interest: A new Mazama nature trail, and a new/old hiking boot. Mazama Meadows conservation development, on the SW quadrant of our slowly growing village, includes this short loop trail along the river. The Methow Conservancy put this development together, out of what the county had zoned for commercial and high density residential. This old plan would have detracted from the classic scenic view from Mazama, up toward Last Chance Point. Most of this land is now dedicated to agriculture, with two small home site clusters, and the nature trail leading to the beach. The story of how all this was accomplished is now told with a display central to the fields, before you get to the trail. Classic riparian forest on this trail should be excellent birding. Like MVSTA's trails, which also have an easement through Mazama Meadows, it's a good example of why "conservation development" is not an oxymoron.

The new/old boot is by Portland's Danner shoe company, and I discovered it by chance at Wenatchee's American Shoe Store. It's a revival of the all leather one piece hiking shoe, similar to the quality formerly only available from the Russell Moccasin Company in Wisconsin. Danner's named mine the Mountain Trail 1851. If you miss this old European style of overlapping tongue, rock resistant, glove leather lined, and therefore more durable shoe, you're finally in luck. Danner has some other leather lined boots too.

Eric Burr, Lost Mazama

Fun Times at the Third Annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival

by Mark Oswood, Wenatchee and other contributors



The Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival is a synergy: NCW Audubon Society, the US Forest Service, HawkWatch International and the City of Pateros working together to bring people to birds and birds to people. Vans delivered birders from Pateros to Chelan Ridge, one of the major sites for monitoring raptor migration in the US (run by the US Forest Service and HawkWatch International), and the only place in the state hosting multiple scientific investigations on migrant raptors. Visitors experienced, close-up and first-hand, banding of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks and watched other raptors (including Swainson's Hawk, Merlin, and Northern Harrier) soar overhead, migrating south. Chelan Ridge is the best place to see unusual hawks in Washington; Broad-winged and Red-

shouldered Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Ferruginous Hawk, and Northern Hawk Owl are all rare migrants that have been recorded there.

32 bird species were seen on a field trip, led by Meredith Spencer and Jenny Graevell, to the Wells Wildlife Area. Some highlights were a nice range of fall warblers (including Palm and Townsend's), Gray Catbird, and American White Pelican. The WSU Raptor Club and the Okanogan Wildlife League both had live raptors on display at Memorial Park. Visitors were able to get up-close views and learn about the hawks and owls from their handlers and caretakers. In an activity organized by Susan Ballinger, festival attendees spent time dissecting owl pellets and learning about the diets of these predators.

Some festival goers reconvened at the North Cascades Basecamp near Mazama Saturday night and Sunday for a presentation and field trip by Jim Watson, WDFW Raptor Research Biologist. At Harts Pass they saw over 50 migrating raptors including a pair of juvenile Prairie Falcons unsuccessfully hunting a hoary marmot.

Survey forms have indicated a very positive experience for the visitors to the Festival. Most say they would come again and they all enjoyed seeing the live birds up close and

personal both on Chelan Ridge and in Memorial Park at Pateros. Suggestions for next year included more publicity and expansion of the event to include more vendors, and food and to remind folks to bring hiking poles for the walk to the observation point!



Bones from dissected owl pellets photo by Torre Stockard, Winthrop

[Early registrants for next year's trips to Chelan Ridge will be able to band a pterodactyl (Pterodactylus); we call this a JurassicPerk.]

Learn About Fall Fungi

by Susan Ballinger, Wenatchee

The Wenatchee Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society, invites all to attend our free October program: **Fall Fungi in the Wenatchee Watershed**; Oct. 11, 7-9 pm; Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center with Mycologist, Mick Mueller, USDA Forest Service scientist.

Every fall a large and varied crop of mushrooms and other fungi pop up in the hills and woods of our area. Mick Mueller, a mycologist and fire officer with the Wenatchee River Ranger District of the US Forest Service, knows them well, and will inform us all with his talk and slide show. He will provide samples of many of them and you are encouraged to bring along your own for identification.



WSU Raptor Club Barn Owl photo by Susan Ballinger, Wenatchee

Clearly Dangerous

As fall brings fewer hours of daylight, millions upon millions of birds instinctually take flight to southerly destinations for our winter. Some birds have successfully made this journey before, but for this year's hatchlings migration is new and full of perils. Many will not survive. Avian window strikes are a danger that is estimated to kill as many as a billion birds a year in the United States. During spring and fall migration, commercial buildings and skyscrapers pose a significant danger for migrating birds.

As winter arrives, birds attracted to our backyard bird feeders do not recognize windows as a hazard. The reflection of sky or vegetation, light coming through from windows located opposite each other, panicked predator evasion or even disputed territory aggression are all likely reasons avian window strikes occur.

Eliminating window reflectivity will help eliminate bird strikes. Decorative window cling decals are available to help break up the reflections of sky or vegetation. I have not found these to be terribly effective. Hanging plant baskets or wind chimes placed in front of the offending window also does not work. I have had success preventing window strikes in three ways. One of these methods should work for you. The first is closing your blinds, shades or curtains. This inexpensive method works with what you already have within your household. The drawback of course is that you have eliminated the light and view from the outside. A second alternative is the use of a product called Bird Screen made by the Bird Screen Company, available at www.birdscreen.com. This is a screen attached

by Jenny Graevell, East Wenatchee

in front of the window that provides a flexible barrier much like a trampoline. If a bird does fly into the Bird Screen it bounces off before hitting the solid glass behind. I have watched Mountain Chickadees ricochet off the Bird Screen and fly unscathed to the sunflower feeder with nary a feather fluffed!

My favorite avian window strike preventer is a product called CollidEscape. It is a perforated window film that adheres to the outside of your window. It blocks the outside reflectivity, which is great for birds, while allowing light in, which is great for us. This is a versatile product which can be custom made to fit your window and decor. To get more info on their product go to www.CollidEscape.org. Part of the proceeds helps fund studies to help prevent window strike collisions. It is a great company to work with. Whichever alternative you decide, there is a way we all can help to eliminate the sickening thud of window collision.

Editor's note – We have successfully reduced the number of bird strikes on our windows with a product called WindowAlert. It is a set of decals that reflect ultraviolet sunlight. The UV light is invisible to us but glows for birds. Before applying these decals we lost numerous birds, especially fledglings, and this year have only had a couple of deaths due to window strikes. We did not have enough of these decals so we also used blue masking tape on a stretch of plexiglas deck railing that was a hazard to hummingbirds leaving the feeder by the dining room window. We now plan to replace the plex with thin horizontal wires which should be less of a hazard. To find out more about WindowAlert, see their website www.windowalert.com

What to do if You Find an Injured Animal

by Lisa Lindsay, Okanogan Wildlife League

Okanogan Wildlife League often receives calls asking how to help an animal that has been found orphaned or injured. Most people have nothing but good intentions in mind, but we can often do more harm than good when we try to help an orphaned or suspected injured or sick animal.

First of all, it is illegal to hold a wild animal in your home. Almost all birds (raptors, songbirds, waterfowl, etc.) are protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and cannot be held without the proper permits. Mammals of any size are dangerous to work with and many carry zoonotic diseases (parasites, rabies, etc.) that can be transmitted to people and our pets. For these reasons, both state and federal wildlife departments license qualified individuals to be wildlife rehabilitators if they have training and expertise in working with these animals. Secondly, even sick or injured wildlife will do their best to defend themselves or flee a threatening situation. It is highly advised that you contact a wildlife rehabilitator before approaching or catching or

removing a wild animal or bird from any location. If you do not feel comfortable attempting to catch a wild animal, leave it where it is and call a wildlife rehabilitator or a fish and wildlife representative. Sometimes the first chance is the only chance to help an animal that needs medical attention.

Should you happen upon a bird that you believe is orphaned or injured, watch it from a distance for a few moments. Is it a juvenile or an adult? Does it appear to be injured or in immediate distress (bleeding, obvious broken wings or legs, panting, etc.)? Is it in an area where it may be further traumatized (in the road, in a yard with a dog or cat)?

If you believe you have found an orphaned bird, do not immediately approach it. Watch the bird from a distance to see if the parents are visiting and feeding it. Many young fledgling (feathered young) birds spend time on the ground as they learn to fly. Most parents will come back every couple of hours to feed the baby, but may take up to four to six hours. *Continued Next Page*

Notes from Mazama

by Bob Spiwak, Mazama

It is a bit difficult to think of October what with the deadline being mid-September, but so it goes in the publishing business. Difficult, because for me anyway, October is often the most glorious month in the Methow Valley. October begins with a definite change of weather, a shortening of days, a dropping of leaves of underbrush and a few deciduous trees. But we are building up to a large climax as the crisp air and fewer daylight hours bring forth a spectacle of color - predominantly masses of yellows and golds. Nature's Midas Touch. Unlike in the central Cascades, a mere one hundred or so miles south, where the vine maples explode in red, our few vine maples here are already dropping mostly nondescript leaves and the few helicopter leaf seeds have begun to float down. The leaf show here peaks October 15, give or take a day or two, when the valley is carpeted in color. The weather hints of winter toward the end, sometimes even an errant light snowfall will cover the ground, and then melt by midday in time for some dedicated golfers to chase the little ball, each day possibly being the last as November comes closer.

I have been playing golf regularly with Dave Chantler for almost nine years, spending almost as much time together in a car as actually playing the Grande Auld Gayme. We tend to travel to exciting places like Orondo, or south of Lake Chelan. Chantler has acquired the nickname "Chucky", short for Chucky Cheese because he is the cheese guru for Hank's Market in Twisp. He prefers "Freddy Fromage" but to no avail among his hacker companions. He is an expert on cheeses and wines and consultant for Hank's as well as other

eateries in the area. The man has a remarkable memory and can cite the winners of major golf tournaments of the past as well as other things that occupy histories on a variety of subjects. He is a pianist, and we have spent time in lengthy discussions of opera.

His major forté is none of the above. His passion is birds and photographing them. His avian photography is equal to any seen in magazines. He periodically has public showings of his pictures, usually of the latest birding expedition he has taken somewhere in the world. Most recently he has been to Tasmania. Dave is of the sort that if you ask him the time he will build you a Swiss watch. In some instances, the devil is in the details. As a person who has pretty much been limited to identifying Twitter Birds and Flutter Birds, I have learned a lot from him but alas, retained little. So goes my short term memory. Not his. Genus, species, family, range; he knows whereof he speaks.

It took some prying and cajoling on my part to get an answer from him on where he currently resided on the Worldwide Life List scorecard. A modest man, he was loath to give specifics, but ultimately admitted that he was in the top fifty worldwide. Sometime in the future he'll be off with his Nikons and booga-booga lenses to Ethiopia which apparently has the greatest number of eagle species anywhere. Many other rare birds of course will be sought on the trip.

Ethiopia? I hope he returns.

*Dave's photos can be seen at
www.flickr.com/photos/pinebird/*

What to do if You Find an Injured Animal, continued from the previous page

Unless the baby is in danger, do not move the baby and watch it for the allotted four to six hours. If the parents do not return, see if the nest can be located in the general area of the baby. If you find one and can reach it, place the baby back in the nest and continue watching to see if parents return after that time. If you cannot reach the nest, secure a small box or plastic container to an area in the same tree that you can reach and continue to observe. If the parents do not return or you are unable to find a nest, put the baby in a small box and put it in a warm, quiet location and call a rehabilitator for further instructions. Do not attempt to feed or water the baby as many birds – songbirds and raptors alike – require specialized formulas to help them obtain the necessary nutrition to grow and flourish.

If you find an injured adult, do not approach it until you are certain it needs assistance – actively bleeding areas, broken bones, lethargy, or panting. If you cannot decipher if it needs help, approach it slowly and calmly. If it moves to evade you, make sure you send it to a safe location and do not attempt to catch it at this point. If it flies away, it most likely does not need assistance, but just because it can fly does not

mean it is not sick. Watch to see where it lands and if it does not travel far, call a rehabilitator for further assistance.

If the animal is definitely injured, do not approach it until you are ready to attempt to catch it or have called a wildlife representative to capture the animal. If you are comfortable catching the animal, a small towel and a small box will usually work with most small songbirds. A small net (butterfly or small fishing net) can prove handy as well. If it is a raptor, make sure you have a pair of thick gloves, such as welding gloves, a large sheet or blanket and a large enough cardboard box or animal carrier in which to put it. In catching any animal, it is often helpful to have an assistant or two, not only to offer help in catching the animal, but to assist you should you become injured.

Try to approach the animal from behind and as slowly and quietly as possible. Try not to make eye contact (especially in mammals). If you have assistance, try to advance from both sides to prevent the animal from escaping. If you are alone, approach the animal so if it does try to escape it will not put itself in further danger. *Continued Next Page*

Small Stories

article and photo by Mark Oswood, Wenatchee

I learned that birding can be a place where spirit meets biology from my father. My father came late in life to birding but it was full immersion; he watched, listened to and read about birds. In these years I was a biology professor in Alaska, so my father's visits were family doings for sure but also chances for him to see those only-in-Alaska birds. One year, we made a trip to the Seward Peninsula, lodging in Nome, looking for summer breeding birds on the tundra and for birds straying from Asia, a short flight across the Bering Strait. Nome had a small fleet of old pickups for rent. You could spot the visiting birders on the few roads radiating out of Nome by the spotting scopes poking out of windows like cannons on old warships, the optics worth more than the trucks.

My father saw some good birds - "lifers" (new additions to his life list of birds seen). Nearly all bucket-list destinations for birders have their own checklist of birds that might be seen. In the way of birders, these checklists become annotated with maps and notes. Checklists are models of understatement, a lifetime of looking for a bird condensed into a checkmark next to a bird name.

On a climb up a hill, stumbling through the tussocks, we came upon the head of a red fox, nestled in the tundra, growing wildflowers. This reminder that life and death are good friends was, I think, to be an especially important memory for my father, soon to develop leukemia of the non-negotiable kind. The fox head and the flowers was a Small Story for both of us, joining other Small Stories from this trip.

I think that memories are stored as Small Stories in our soft, wet brains, so different from the dry bytes of hard drives. These Small Stories, like those round Tinker Toy connectors, link up with other Small Stories. One goal of life is to gather many Small Stories and make lots of connections among them.

What to do if You Find an Injured Animal, continued from the previous page

If it continues to evade you, stop your attempts and call a wildlife rehabilitator or fish and wildlife representative. When you get close enough to the animal, use the net or towel/blanket and place it over the animal. In all animals, make sure you know where their mouths and legs are and in raptors, securing the feet is the first task to do. For small birds, try not to pounce on them or squeeze them too tightly, just scoop them up in the towel and place them in the box. After covering the animal, keep its head covered and in the case of raptors, work your way down to control the feet. You do not want to get caught in any raptors' talons – they are apt to not let go and squeeze more tightly if you panic or try to get away. Pick the animal up and place it securely in the box. Secure the box and place the box in dark, warm, quiet room. Do not attempt to feed or water the animal or treat the animal in any way. Call a fish and wildlife representative or your local wildlife rehabilitator to set up transport arrangements for the animal. Please note that the quicker a rehabilitator receives an animal, the better its chances at survival.

Should you be unsure how to proceed or need questions at any time with a suspected injured bird or mammal, do not hesitate to contact Lisa Lindsay, a wildlife rehabilitator at Okanogan Wildlife League at 560-3828.



Lisa Lindsay, Okanogan Wildlife League with a Red-tailed Hawk at the Hawk Migration Festival in Pateros.

photo by Mark Oswood

October Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

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|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| October 6 | Audubon Council of Washington | Get together with other Washington Audubon Chapter members |
| October 11 | Fall Fungi! | With the Native Plant Society, see page 4 |
| October 12-14 | Ridgefield BirdFest | A wonder-filled weekend of nature, wildlife, and Native American culture. See www.ridgefieldfriends.org/ |
| December 14 - January 5 | Christmas Bird Count Season | Be sure and sign up for several. In our region there are CBC's in Wenatchee, Leavenworth, Chelan, Bridgeport, and Twisp. Did I miss any? |



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