



Volume 46 #7 April 2013

What are the Consequences of a Childhood Removed from Nature? *Play Again* at the Environmental Film Series

NCW Audubon is one of the sponsors of the Environmental Film Series at the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center. Our film for this year is *Play Again*, to be shown at 7 p.m., April 16.

Seventy years ago, the first televisions became commercially available. The first desktop computers went on sale thirty years ago, and the first cell phones a mere fifteen years ago. During their relatively short tenure these three technologies have changed the way we live. Some of these changes are good. Television can now rapidly disseminate vital information. Computers turned that flow of information into a two-way street. Cell phones enable unprecedented connectivity with our fellow human beings. And the merging of cell phones and the internet has even allowed protest movements, like those in Iran, to organize and thrive. There's also a down side. For many, especially children, screens have become the de facto medium by which the greater world is experienced. A virtual world of digitally transmitted pictures, voices, and scenarios has become more real to this generation than the world of sun, water, air, and

living organisms, including fellow humans. The average American child now spends over 8 hours in front of a screen each day. She emails, texts, and updates her status incessantly. He can name hundreds of corporate logos, but

couldn't be higher. By most accounts, this generation will face multiple crises — environmental, economic and social. Will this screen world — and its bevy of virtual experiences — adequately prepare

these “digital natives” to address the problems they'll face, problems on whose resolution their own survival may depend? As we stand at a turning point in our relationship with earth, we find ourselves immersed in the gray area between the natural and virtual worlds. From a global perspective of wonder and hope, *Play Again* examines this unique point in history.

At a time when children spend more time in the virtual

world than the natural world, *Play Again* unplugs a group of media savvy teens and takes them on their first wilderness adventure, documenting the wonder that comes from time spent in nature and inspiring action for a sustainable future. This film encourages individuals, families, schools, and communities to examine their relationships with both screen technology and nature, and inspires them to take action to reconnect children to the natural world.

Bonus ... A mini-fair of NCW outdoor education organizations! Following the 53-minute film, representatives from outdoor-loving organizations will be at tables loaded with information about opportunities for children (of all ages) to explore the natural world. Audience members are encouraged to eat a cookie and drink some juice while visiting with these organizations.

“What they do not value, they will not protect. And what they do not protect, they will lose.”

-Charles Jordan, *Play Again*

less than ten native plants. She aspires to have hundreds of online friends, most she may never meet in person. He masters complicated situations presented in game after game, but often avoids simple person-to-person conversation. They are almost entirely out of contact with the world that, over millions of years of evolution, shaped human beings — the natural world. The long-term consequences of this experiment on human development remain to be seen, but the stakes

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."

North Central Washington Audubon Society

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

April Birding Buddies Walk Rescheduled

by Jenny Graevell, East Wenatchee

The April Birding Buddy Bird Walk to the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery, has been **rescheduled to April 27**. If you have any questions or want to register please call Jenny at 886-4518.

On last month's Bird Walk in the Horan Natural Area, we saw small groups of kinglets and Yellow-rumped Warblers foraging in the cottonwood trees. White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows were also on the move and our group was delighted to see a tan striped White-throated Sparrow (WTSP). It's song was not quite typical of a White-throated, which leads me to ask - are WTSP songs innate or learned? The bird resembled a first winter bird.

Violet-green Swallows swarmed the skies above the Confluence; the first of the year that I had seen.

Remember, space is limited on these walks and you must pre-register by calling Jenny at 886-4518

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.

Spring has been breaking out all over. Until yesterday. We were greeted with wet gloppy snow for half the day. But as it is spring, it was mostly melted by evening and I could see the tiny wildflowers once again. Spring birds have been exchanged for winter birds too. The Common Redpolls all left during the last week of March to be replaced at our feeders by flocks of Pine Siskins, bright yellow American Goldfinches, occasional Cassin's Finches, Rufous Hummingbirds and an ever-growing flock of Red-winged Blackbirds. I am missing Mountain Bluebirds though. Since we have lived here, they have returned before the Western Bluebirds and usually before the snow melts. Is anyone else missing their Mountain Bluebirds? We are hearing more songs of Western Meadowlarks on our hill this spring.

Ken and I had a nice vacation at the end of March, starting in Port Angeles and then to LaPush and then to Pacific Beach. Birding was not overwhelming. Shorebirds had not yet arrived and many winter birds must have already left. The most diverse array of species was at Ediz Hook – a long spit of land that surrounds much of the harbor at Port Angeles. We were treated to Surf Scoters, Harlequin Ducks, Long-tailed Ducks, Black Oystercatchers and even some shorebirds. I was dismayed to discover a colony of feral cats near the end of the hook. A sign in the public rest room pleaded with people not to leave their cat food cans in there, due to the stench, so a special trash can was outside – just for cat food cans! I do not understand why herds of feral cats are encouraged anywhere. Cats have been bred as domestic animals and abandoning them to live as semi-wild animals does not do them any favors. Disease and injury are common and their lives may be greatly compromised. And then there's the problem of their impact on native birds and other wildlife. Can someone explain to me why some people believe that feral cat colonies are a good thing?

The last day of the trip we could have gotten up early and raced around and finished packing so we could go dig razor clams for a fourth time but we opted for a more relaxed approach to the day. We took a long walk at the south end of the Ocean Shores peninsula in hopes of possibly seeing any remaining wintering Snowy Owls. Last year they stayed til nearly the middle of April so I thought there might be a faint chance. I was not overly optimistic so didn't take a big camera and long lens. That was good insurance that we would see something interesting and sure enough, we saw at least three Snowy Owls and one Short-eared Owl! I have some distant photos of them and lots of fun memories from a great trip out to the coast.



This tiny (8 inches tall) but ferocious Northern Saw-whet Owl was observed at Bridgeport State Park early in March photo by Teri J Pieper

NCW Recent Bird Sightings

compiled from ncwabird email list

On February 27th the first of the year (FOY) Turkey Vulture was reported in Okanogan County, just south of Omak. On the 28th, observers noticed the first Say's Phoebes in the Methow and a Varied Thrush in East Wenatchee, while in Curlew people saw a Merlin (Pacific) and Townsend's Solitaire. On March 4th I noted that Great Horned Owls had taken over a nest previously occupied by Red-tailed Hawks. Great Horned Owls were also observed nesting just north of the Odabashian Bridge in East Wenatchee the same day and the first Mountain Bluebird of the year was reported on Badger Mountain. March 8th I saw my FOY Violet-green Swallows; Western Meadowlarks were heard singing near Chelan Falls and a Cooper's Hawk was seen eating a rabbit in East Wenatchee. March 10, Western Bluebirds arrived at our house. White-headed Woodpeckers have been seen more than once on Bear Creek Road near Winthrop, maybe nesting? On March 15th, an early Western Kingbird was noted in Chelan and on the 16th Anna's Hummingbirds began to be reported in East Wenatchee. Pine Grosbeaks continued to be seen in Pearygin Lake State Park. On the 17th, a pair of Belted Kingfishers was acting territorial along the Methow River and Sandhill Cranes were observed on Cameron Lake Road, east of the Okanogan River. I have observed Peregrine Falcons twice recently – one on the 23rd here at home in the Methow Valley and the other April 1st near Wells Dam. On the 29th, a Yellow-billed Loon in near-breeding plumage was seen on the Columbia at Pateros! A Mountain Bluebird was reported on top of Mission Ridge March 31st at 6800'! Long-billed Curlews are showing up around Quincy and Vesper Sparrows in the Methow. The first report of an Osprey was April 1 near the Horan Natural Area in Wenatchee. A Rufous Hummingbird showed up at our feeder on April 2 and a Calliope arrived in Twisp on the 3rd. White-throated Swifts were observed in Pipestone Canyon. On April 5, author Jack Nisbet observed a Snowy Owl near Mansfield. Central Ferry Canyon continues to have Black-backed Woodpeckers and also Gray-crowned Rosy-finches. Observers are enjoying the Sage Grouse at the Leahy lek. If you go, remember that the lek is on private ground and that the grouse need plenty of space.

The NCWAS Website Needs YOUR Help!

by Torre Stockard, Winthrop

As anyone who visits our virtual spaces on the web knows, NCWAS is in desperate need of a website makeover. We've received quotes for a basic web redesign as well as for an exciting new project: a regional online birding guide. The quotes are very reasonable by industry standards, yet even the basic website redesign alone would commit a sizeable portion of our annual chapter funds. Therefore, we're asking for your sponsorship to re-vamp our online presence. Donations in any amount will be greatly appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. Please mail to NCWAS (P.O. Box 2934, Wenatchee, WA 98807-2934) and include a note indicating your contribution is for the website upgrade. (As always, donations can be anonymous if you prefer.) For more information, please read on.....

Over the last couple years, your North Central Washington Audubon board members have tried to implement new ways for our "flock" to connect with each other and with our chapter activities via the e-waves. We now have a Facebook page (North-Central-Washington-Audubon-Society), an email list, and (most recently) a discussion group which allows subscribers to post sightings, ask questions, announce bird walks..... or share whatever nature and bird stories that strike their fancy (ncwabird@yahoogroups.com). It's been wonderful to watch more and more people getting involved through these media; among other things, I've really enjoyed noting the progression of returning spring migrants across our far-flung, four-county region as folks have posted their observations to ncwabird.

Our website (ncwaudubon.org) has also been a way for us to announce programs and bird walks, post The Wild Phlox newsletters, and provide other birding information that we think is of interest to you. However

(as you may have noticed), it is in dire need of a serious re-vamp. Although parts of it are kept up-to-date (updated roughly once a month), the format is limiting and, well, stale. And from an administrator's point of view, it suffers because the programming required to make changes is too difficult and time-consuming for our all-volunteer board to keep it up effectively.

Our vision is to have a new website which, in tandem with our Facebook site and ncwabird listserv, will anchor our chapter's online resources for all-things-bird in North Central Washington. The good news is: we've found a website designer who's excited to create an online makeover for our modest nonprofit group. To get us up and going quickly, they've proposed doing the most critical pages first, at a basic cost of approximately \$600. This will give our website a fresh look while improving the functionality we have now (Home page, Contacts, Events, Newsletter, etc.), and the reprogramming will make it much easier for us to make timely updates. Importantly, the new design will also support expansion in the future, which will be key to the next big project we're working on: an online area birding guide to North Central Washington. This longer-term project (estimated to cost several thousand dollars) will result in a trip-planning tool for exploring where to bird in our region, providing information on geographic locations, habitat types, driving directions, where to find particular bird species, etc. We expect it to become a focal point of our newly redesigned website.

As you might imagine, we're extremely excited about the possibilities afforded by a website re-design - a long overdue upgrade that will be a keystone to our outreach efforts. However, although our North Central Washington chapter region is the largest geographically of any in Washington state (roughly the size of Maryland!), our budget is limited. Thus our need to turn to you, our members and supporters, to make our virtual presence a reality. (Donation instructions above in the first paragraph.) For more information, feel free to contact webmaster@ncwaudubon.org. Many thanks in advance for your interest, ideas, and support—you're truly the lifeblood of our chapter!

P.S. If you have photos you're willing to share (of birds, birders, habitat), your material could become part of our new chapter website....your website! Email to webmaster@ncwaudubon.org.

THANK YOU!



A Sharp-shinned Hawk watches the feeders
photo by Teri J Pieper

Wenas Audubon Campout - 50th Anniversary Memorial Day Weekend at Wenas Creek Campground

by Doris Johnson

You're invited to attend a celebration of birds, botany, and the beauty of spring in eastern Washington.

The Wenas Audubon Campout will take place on Memorial Day Weekend (May 24-27) at the Wenas Creek Campground SW of Ellensburg. This three-day annual event invites campers to participate in a variety of activities, including birding field trips, flower walks, field sketching, and bat and owl prowls. You do not need to be an Audubon member to attend. All are welcome.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wenas Audubon Campout. In the spring of 1963, three women wandered into the Wenas Creek area while on a bird walk. Struck by the abundance of wildlife they found there, the women rallied to protect the area and reserve the site for bird-lovers to gather on Memorial Weekend for years to

come. In 2013, the tradition continues. Event organizers have planned additional programming to celebrate the last half-century of Wenas Audubon Campouts, including a photo gallery and fireside presentation of the natural and homesteading history of the Wenas Valley. Commemorative t-shirts will also be available for purchase.

Visit the Wenas Audubon website (www.wenasaudubon.org) for directions, an outline of field trips and programming, and more information. Pre-registration is not required. The campout is free and open to all ages; however, donations are encouraged. Every vehicle must display a Washington State Discover Pass (www.discoverpass.wa.gov/).

Contact Doris Johnson, dellenj@comcast.net or Laura Johnson, lejohns13@gmail.com for more details

WOS Conference in Omak

from WOS

The Washington Ornithological Society (WOS) holds an Annual Conference, complete with field trips, banquet, and speakers, in a different part of the state and a different season each year. All WOS members are invited to attend. Omak, in North Central Washington, will be the site of WOS's 25th Annual Conference, June 21-24. Headquarters for the four-day conference will be at the Best Western Peppertree Inn at 820 Koala Drive, Omak, right off State Highway 97. WOS has arranged for reduced room rates.

All registration will be online. Registration opens April 15, and will begin at 12:01 am. You are encouraged to visit the registration website at www.wos.org and familiarize yourself with it, so you are ready to go when registration opens.

All attendees must be WOS members. You can renew your membership or join WOS on the website. If you are a current member of WFO (Western Field Ornithologists), and you wish to attend the WOS conference, you will be given one free complimentary year of WOS membership when you register.

WOS conferences are known for their wide variety of guided field trips. This year is no exception. Trips will be offered covering areas as far east as Sherman Pass and the San Poil River and west to Washington Pass; north to the border with British Columbia and south to Cassimer Bar on the Columbia River.

Western Field Ornithologists Annual Meeting in Olympia

from WFO

Mark your calendars for a Joint Conference of Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) and the Washington Ornithological Society (WOS) hosted by Black Hills Audubon Society August 22-25, at the Red Lion Hotel, Olympia

This conference will feature:

- Workshops to enhance your field skills
 - Fall Warblers: Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett (includes both classroom and field sessions)
 - Sapsuckers – ID challenges and research update: Steve Shunk
 - Gull Identification: Mike Donahue

- Dragonflies: Dennis Paulson (includes both classroom and field sessions)
- Wilderness First Aid: Heath Wakelee
- Making full use of eBird: Brian Sullivan
- Keynote talk by John Marzluff on those amazing Corvids
- A full set of field trips (including Pelagics)
- Photo and Bird Sounds ID sessions
- Two sessions of talks on recent research in the region with a plenary talk by Dennis Paulson

Registration will open in early May. Check for information at the WFO web site: www.westernfieldornithologists.org

Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest May 16 – 19

from Wenatchee River Institute

Wenatchee River Institute is one of many partners, volunteers and sponsors working together to create Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest: a four-day nature festival and celebration of watchable wildlife and their habitat.

The festival begins in early dawn with Early Bird hikes, and continues well after dark with events such as our keynote address, Bluegrass BBQ, and Owl Prowls. Along the way we offer lectures, tours, strenuous hikes, mellow family-friendly walks, birding by bike, river rafting, pontoon boat trips, music, dance, art exhibits and workshops on many topics related to birds and the environment of the Wenatchee valley. We fashion events for all experience levels, all ages, and all fitness levels. On Sunday, look for bi-lingual Spanish-English events!

Bird Fest honors International Migratory Bird Day. We celebrate the incredible journey of migratory birds returning from their wintering grounds in Mexico and Central and South America.

Join us the third weekend in May to explore spectacular habitats ranging from sunny Ponderosa pine forests to flower-covered hillsides to lush shorelines. Enjoy birding by foot, boat, bicycle, van or wheelchair, led by expert guides. Fun for experienced and novice birders of all ages!

For more information see www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com/INDEX.HTML



Notes from Mazama

photo and article by Bob Spiwak, Mazama

In winter's waning days our through-the-window entertainment was watching the squirrels as they tried to outwit the human endeavors to create rodent-free bird feeders. Eventually, the rascals found the Achilles heel in just about all of our, well Ms. Gloria's mostly, attempts, and attacked the food. The fun was in watching the jays dive at the squirrels, and if the birds found a place to grab some food the bushy tails would chase after them. It is a frequent winter ritual; as a squirrel pursues the offending jay, one or two more would immediately supplant it and grab what food they could.

Well, Spring arrived officially in mid-March. Two days prior, a pair of Wood Ducks flew onto the pond. We surmise they are the yearly visitors.

The next day a Mallard pair arrived. Having pretty much terminated the bird feeding, we did put out cracked corn for the ducks. Even though they were second to arrive, the larger Mallards immediately staked claim to the pond and began chasing the woodies. Bullying we have found begins far from the classrooms of elementary schools. To us crass humans, it is easy entertainment.

April came in just a few days ago, first with another woodie pair, and then another. A second pair of Mallards came and went. The Mallards spent several days of courtship bobbing their heads and eventually consummated this year's marriage. The poor hen, or so I thought, was held under water for almost a minute as her mate had his way with her. Poor hen my eye. She emerged with a smile on her face and a shake of her feathers. The male of course sailed off into the brush for either a drink or a smoke, as guys are wont to do.

Now there are six woodies on the pond and only two are hens. This pair of females generally keeps to themselves because the guys seem to have constant and seriously vicious attacks on one another. Their conflict can create great geysers of water as they collide; their flotillas leave large wakes behind them as they charge to and fro, frequently lost in the spray of their assaults.

That's the current entertainment. I created a photo blind last year because the woodies are so flighty at the sight or sound of a nearby human. This contrivance has worked well and we can sneak out onto the camouflaged deck and stick a lens through the mesh.

The usual twitter and flutter birds are arriving, albeit slowly. I have seen but one robin. Here in the mountains it is still winter, despite five days of real warm weather that somehow mis-read the calendar.



Pondering the Translucent Elusive Palousive

by Betsy Steele, Leavenworth

As the robins are about to return here along the Chumstick/ Eagle Creek drainages, our thoughts turn to worms....don't they? Well perhaps not.

Some of us, however, are anxious to do earthy explorations in areas where, last spring, strange denizens were discovered. Strange, but oddly familiar because they appeared identical to the "elusive" Palouse worms we'd seen photos of from researchers in Idaho. It was exciting to unearth them the first time a couple of years ago during trail repair when my husband and son called out: "What's this we have here!?"

Some ten inches long, transparent but pinkish, these worms were unconventional. Even their behavior was different – rather sluggish, as though not wanting to draw attention to themselves. A number of them had swollen clitellum, ready to shed these rings of tissue that would soon encapsulate baby wrigglers.

When knowledgeable local naturalists examined the worms they too agreed that they were certainly not the garden variety. Surprisingly, Wenatchee National Forest officials were rather casual about the apparent discovery of what has been considered an exceedingly rare creature. They essentially said, "Yes, they have been found in the east side forested foothills."

Two years ago, the Palouse worm was considered for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act, but apparently further study of the worms' population range and habitat needs was required.

Thus it remains in "worm limbo" with biologists systematically digging up evidence.

Worms lurk in their humble subterranean abodes going about the important task of creating loam and facilitating nutrient absorption. Throughout much of the country their populations have been affected by scouring glaciations, the introduction of non-native worms and, more recently, plowing up soil that had been undisturbed for long eras.

Meanwhile, right here in our Douglas fir/ponderosa pine forests, could be the very same native species that researchers have been trying to lure out of the eastern Washington prairies for years.

But that has not yet been verified by DNA analysis.

How much is really known about the diverse oligochaeta in North America? And how abundant and adaptable is the so-called "Palouse" worm.

We may know more this spring as the ground thaws and more specimens may yet be found.

Hands Across the Foothills

from Chelan Douglas Land Trust

The Chelan-Douglas Land Trust is sponsoring Hands Across the Foothills, an event to raise awareness of the incredible value of the Wenatchee Foothills to our community. This event is part of The Wenatchee Foothills Campaign, which is raising money for land acquisitions and stewardship funding in the Wenatchee Foothills, and for trail restoration at Saddle Rock. For more information on the campaign, please see www.cdlandtrust.org/what-we-do/wenatchee-foothills-campaign

When? Saturday, April 20,
8:00 am to 1:00 pm
Where? Saddle Rock

The event goal is to have people holding hands, on a trail from the bottom of Saddle Rock to the top, almost 1.4 miles. Assuming one person per 3 feet, we need approximately 2,465 people to accomplish the feat!

When all participants are in place, we will join hands to form a human chain. Photographers and cameras mounted on remote control planes will capture the moment.

For more information or to register see www.cdlandtrust.org/hands-across-foothills or call 667-9708

Sign up for Christmas Bird Count Results and Citizen Science eNewsletter

from NAS

This year the National Audubon Society is moving to digital delivery of the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) results rather than printing and mailing American Birds, the CBC summary, to participants. In its place, NAS will be producing a quarterly citizen science eNewsletter which will contain the results of all our Citizen Science programs, including the CBC articles and summaries that previously were distributed in the printed edition of American Birds, as well as information about other Audubon Science programs. If you would like to receive this citizen science eNewsletter,

please sign up online at www.audubon.org/citizenscience by entering your email address just to the right of "Want to keep up with Citizen Science?" Joining Audubon's online citizen science network ensures you will receive updates on the latest research results, reports from Audubon scientists, and notification when count summaries are posted. In addition, you can learn about other citizen science programs and opportunities that may interest you. Please take a moment to sign up now and also to share this information with others who may find it of interest.

April Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

April 16	Wenatchee Environmental Film Series	See page 1 for more info
April 21	Earth Day in Leavenworth	See www.wenatcheeinstitute.org/about-us/programs/earth-day-fair for more info
April 27	Birding Buddies Bird Walk	The Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery. See page 2
April 27	Eastern WA Chapters Meeting	Toppenish Wildlife Refuge, contact Chris Parsons
May 7	Learn about White-headed Woodpeckers	Jeff Kozma comes to the Methow Conservancy's First Tuesday. www.methowconservancy.org/events.html
May 16-19	Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest	See page 6 for more info
May 24-27	Wenas Audubon Campout	50th Anniversary! See page 5 for more info.
September 14	Chelan Ridge Hawk Fest	Mark it on your calendar and watch for more info.



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