



Volume 46 #6 March 2013

By Steve Easley, Chelan

## Bird Feeding Adventures

I read your February Wild Phlox Notes about that voracious Sharp-shinned Hawk at your feeders and thought, "Well isn't that something, I've got the same problem running at least back to January 22." Except it hasn't been the same accipiter. First, it was a sub-adult female that made kills one and two (both Dark-eyed Juncos) on January 22 and 23. Then, an adult female took over and made kills 3 - 6 on January 29 (House Finch in the morning, then Dark-eyed Junco during lunch hour), January 31 (Dark-eyed Junco), and February 1 (House Finch). By now the passerines had gotten the idea that it wasn't too wise to hang around my yard, so the population at my feeders had begun to ease off.

Correspondingly, the Sharp-shinned

Hawks made more infrequent visits. Then on February 12 I was visited by a third Sharpie, this time a juvenile female, who perched in my lilacs for over an hour before a careless House Finch flew in and met its fate. Seven total kills that I have witnessed, but I'm not always looking out my window - and neither am I home a lot of the time. So how many additional kills have I missed?

Another issue at my feeders recently has been Mallards. Mallards? What's the issue there? They're birds, aren't they? Well, when they waddle in and push the small ground-feeding birds out of the way and begin to consume large amounts of feed rapidly, it simply gets my dander up! I'm located near the Chelan High School, only a couple blocks away from the Lake Chelan inlet between the two bridges. That's where the Mallards are coming from. How did they find me? The previous two years they had overlooked me altogether. Anyhow, after about a week of failing to keep them "shooed" away I had an "aha!" moment. Why not construct a six foot square by 18 inches high cage



that continues to allow the feed to fall onto the ground and allows small birds to enter, but refuses entrance to Mallards? The project took longer to complete and was more expensive than I expected (sound familiar?), but let me tell you, it was clearly worth it! I installed the caged structure on February 9, and it took one persistent Mallard two days before he finally realized he had been defeated. I haven't seen him in my yard since. What peace of mind!

*editor's note - Steve has come up with a unique way to foil this waterfowl at his feeder. What interesting solutions have you found that worked at your bird feeders? Send us a story and images to share with our members!*



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

#### Officers, Chairs, Board Members

President - Jeff Parsons | 548-0181 | jparsons@nwi.net  
Vice President - Mark Oswood | 662-9087 | moswood@nwi.net  
Treasurer - Teri J Pieper | 630-6224 | teripieper@hotmail.com  
Secretary - Mark Oswood | 662-9087 | moswood@nwi.net  
Bird Sightings - Torre Stockard | birdsightings@ncwaudubon.org  
Conservation - Chris Parsons | 264-4903 | cjparsons@nwi.net  
Education - Mark Oswood | 662-9087 | moswood@nwi.net  
Email Master - Marie Garrett | 669-1800 | marieg@wildblue.net  
Field Trips - Jenny Graevell - 679-3531 | avijenee@yahoo.com  
Dan Stephens | DStephens@wvc.edu  
Membership - Heather Findlay | 429-8167 | heather@eaglesun.net  
Newsletter - Teri J Pieper | 630-6224 | teripieper@hotmail.com  
Programs - Penny Tobiska - ptobiska@nwi.net  
Science Officer - Don McIvor | 997-9456 | puma@methownet.com  
Web Master - Torre Stockard | webmaster@ncwaudubon.org  
At large - Rachel Scown | 860-6676 | raeplay6@aol.com

#### Other Contact information

Website - [www.ncwaudubon.org](http://www.ncwaudubon.org)

Email - [info@ncwaudubon.org](mailto:info@ncwaudubon.org)

Blog - [ncwaudubon.blogspot.com](http://ncwaudubon.blogspot.com)

Mailing address - PO Box 2934 Wenatchee, WA 98807

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

## A Birding Guide for NCW

by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley

The NCW Audubon board has formed a committee to consider the possibility of creating an online birding map/guide to our four-county region. The map may be similar to the Wenatchee River Watershed Birding Map developed by the Forest Service and available at our website at [www.ncwaudubon.org/birding.htm](http://www.ncwaudubon.org/birding.htm). The five person committee is meeting for the first time to determine the purpose and possible structure of the map, as this newsletter goes to print so watch for a more detailed story next month. Input from our membership will help to shape this project as it goes forward. Do you have favorite birding sites to include? What kind of information should the guide have?

A few months ago, we asked if any members might have some historical evidence from NCW Audubon's past. As a reminder, if you have, lurking in your closets or brain, any documents or memories of NCWAS earlier days, please contact us/Mark. We are especially in need of the Wild Phlox prior to the year 2000.

### 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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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](http://www.audubon.org) or drop us a note and we will send you a form for a special rate introductory membership.

In warmer parts of our region, spring is busting out all over with warm days and green grass and bulbs pushing out of the ground. Where I live, there's still a good foot or more, of snow on the ground and while we are getting plenty of sunshine, it's cold at night and often in the low 20's in the morning. Winter birds continue to hang around. The Common Redpolls are the most numerous species at our feeders. I found White-winged Crossbills in our pine trees last week. That's a new yard bird for our list that now tops 100 species in not quite five years. Last month, I wrote about the immature female Sharp-shinned Hawk that has been spreading fear at our feeders. Now she's joined by an adult female Sharpie! They seem to be keeping the Red-winged Blackbirds from taking over but also I see far fewer finches and nuthatches and the Downy Woodpecker population has plummeted. In December I was seeing as many as five downies at a time. Now I'm lucky to see one or two a day. I think the redpolls must be too small to attract the fearsome hawks as they are the only real regular feeder visitors besides the big Northern Flickers.

We also confirmed a new yard mammal – one that we've long suspected was here but we had never seen it with our own eyes. A mama cougar was captured just down the hill from our house! She had been moving between the valley bottom, our hill and the next neighborhood up-valley and those folks were concerned and called in the WDFW and their bear dogs. Rich Beausoleil and his volunteers were able to track Button (her name from a capture three years ago) and the dogs chased her into a tree where they tranquilized her, lowered her to the ground and then collared her and took data as to her health and age. She weighed just over 100 pounds – a healthy weight for a female with cubs and she is five or six years old. She was caught three years ago in the Poorman Creek area near Twisp, outfitted with a collar and turned loose. Since then she has stayed out of trouble and raised some kittens. She had three young from last year when they caught her this time. Last winter, a remote camera caught video of a cougar below our house with three 1 ½ year old kittens and we are guessing it was Button based on an ear tag she had from her first capture. The collars are designed to fall off after two years. I came home when they were lowering her from the tree and got to watch as the crew processed her and then let her go. It was an exciting experience for me.

Gloria Spiwak sent me a note about how she is keeping the jays from 'snarfing down all the suet'. She uses rubber bands and S hooks to hang the feeder. The birds' body weight makes it hard for them to hang on for more than one or two bites. On the front page of this issue, Steve Easley shares with us how he is outwitting Mallards trying to get his bird seed in Chelan. Have you come up with some way to foil those birds that you don't want to feed? Let us know.

## NCW Recent Bird Sightings

compiled from ncwabird email list

Have you joined the ncwabird email list? If not, here are a few highlights that you may have missed? Western Meadowlarks were seen at Bridgeport Bar. American Dippers are being seen and heard throughout the Wenatchee and Methow watersheds. Snowy Owls are being reported near Mansfield and on Cameron Lake Road, east of the Okanogan River. White-winged Crossbills can be found in tall fir and spruce trees in Conconully and at the Winthrop Cemetery. Sage Sparrows are singing in Moses Coulee! Trumpeter Swans have wintered in ponds on private land, but visible from highway 20, upstream from Winthrop and they are now being seen on the Icicle River. The burned ponderosa pine trees in Central Ferry Canyon have had Black-backed Woodpeckers for much of the winter. Williamson's Sapsuckers have



Trumpeter Swans on the Icicle River  
 Copyright 2013 "WINGS ON THE ICICLE" Series  
 Marcy Lagagnier

been reported near Leavenworth and in the Rendezvous area above Winthrop. There have been two reports of a possible Arctic Loon on the Columbia near the Beebe Bridge. A Prairie Falcon was seen and photographed on Upper Bear Creek Road above Pearygin Lake. 500-plus Bohemian Waxwings have been reported on Washburn Island (Okanogan County) and also at the base of Central Ferry Canyon (Douglas County). Two Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen in Bridgeport State park where you can also see several Northern Saw-whet Owls. Red-winged Blackbirds are singing over many frozen ponds throughout the area. And I've yet to see any reports for Say's Phoebes or Mountain Bluebirds. They have usually begun to trickle into our region by now. However the Common Redpolls are still around so maybe they know something we don't. So if you want to keep up with birding in NCW, be sure and sign up for the ncwabird email list. See last month's Phlox or our website for details.

# Warbler Extravaganza

by Meredith Spencer, Bridgeport

Magee Marsh. Maumee Bay State Park. Black Swamp Observatory. The Boardwalk. Crane Creek State Park. Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. The Biggest Week in American Birding!

It seems that every person I bird with has been to one of the above. They all encouraged me to go there too. Why? WARBLERS! I love birding, as much as my husband loves golfing. So, to get to these places I had to have both activities available. We both like camping. Solution - Camp at Maumee Bay State Park, which has a golf course. Perfect. It is only a 15 minute drive from the golf course to The Boardwalk.

So, last May we spent four nights and five days at Maumee Bay State Park. We had a wonderful time. I saw 27 species of warblers on this trip; 14 were life birds for me! Some of the others were birds I had only seen in the fall, when they look entirely different. My favorite was the Black-throated Blue, and my husband picked the Prothonotary

as his favorite. Others that were favorites for me included the Bay-breasted, Mourning, Golden-winged, Cape May, Magnolia, Canada and yes, Kirtland's!

It turned out that we were there for part of the Third Annual Biggest Week in American Birding, which had their headquarters at the Lodge in Maumee Bay State Park. Most of their field trips were filled, but I was able to hear two of Kenn Kaufman's talks. You don't have to register for the birding festival to go to all of the above places I mentioned. They are all open to the public, and many "experts/tour leaders" were there to help with any questions you might have. I highly recommend going to this area in early spring, for the amazingly close looks you get at all these warblers. Sometimes they are described as "dripping off the trees," and that is not a bad description. Check out the Biggest Week in American Birding website for details about their upcoming festival. <http://dev.biggestweekinamericanbirding.com/HOME.aspx>

---

# Streaked Sparrows

by Jenny Graevell, East Wenatchee

They are coming. Striped, streaked, sparrows. LBJ's, (Little Brown Jobs), flying and eating their way north to a field, a bog, a woods near you. A nightmare to separate in the field guides, right? Where do you start? It had a malar stripe? It was brown? It flew off into thicker cover? Boy, that sounds a little like every sparrow I have ever seen.

Identification of species can be simplified if you divide the sparrows into two basic groups: streaked breast species and plain breast species. From this point it is easier to separate habitat, voice, and field marks into a positive identification.

In NCW there are six sparrow species with streaked breasts. Do you recall those species illustrated in last month's

newsletter? Phlox reader Bonnie Orr, of East Wenatchee, devised a clever mnemonic device to aid in remembering the streaked sparrow species.

Lincoln was a Sage.

Foxes live on Savannahs.

Vespers are Songs sung.

The streaked breast sparrows species are: Lincoln's, Sage, Fox, Savannah, Vesper and Song!

We hope separating these birds into one of these two categories will be your first step in simplifying your identification of LBJ's.

---

# March and April Birding Buddies Walks

by Jenny Graevell, East Wenatchee

It is official, it's almost spring! Spring is in the air in North Central Washington. Please join us as we celebrate the changing of seasons with a Bird Walk in the Horan Natural Area of Wenatchee on March 16. Group size will be limited to the first ten people to register. Attendees please dress in seasonal layers, waterproof shoes, hats and gloves and come prepared for a brisk breeze, nice walk and some great birds. No dogs please. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Field notebooks are great to take along for recording species, field marks and bird behavior. We will have loaner binoculars available if requested when registering.

As spring progresses, neotropical migrant birds will be arriving every day. Come join us at the Leavenworth Fish Hatchery, on April 20th, for a bird walk to celebrate their amazing journey. Space is limited to the first 12 people to register. Please dress in seasonable layers. No dogs please. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Bring a lunch and make it a day to remember.

Register for Birding Buddies Walks by calling Jenny Graevell at 886-4518.

## The Saga of Washington's Fish and Wildlife Comes to Twisp

by Mary Kiesau, Winthrop

The Methow Conservancy presents Ken Bevis and The Saga of Washington's Fish and Wildlife for their First Tuesday event in April, on the second Tuesday. If you missed this show in Leavenworth in February, here is your chance to see it in Twisp. Ken will present a joyous, light-hearted musical celebration of Washington's wildlife. How do you tell the story of

Methow Conservancy April  
"First Tuesday" (on the  
2nd Tuesday in April!)  
The Saga of Washington's  
Fish and Wildlife  
April 9th, 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
The Twisp River Pub

such a rich place as Washington? Ken has images from many gifted photographers, stories about the creatures, and original songs about each one!

For more details

on this presentation, please see last month's Wild Phlox. The event is free and open to everyone. This will be a great family-friendly program - bring your kids! The Pub will open at 6 pm and drinks and a buffet dinner will be available for purchase. For more information, contact Mary at 996-2870 or mary@methowconservancy.org.

## Learn to Photograph Wildflowers

by Susan Ballinger, Wenatchee

The Wenatchee Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society invites the public to attend our monthly evening program on March 27 from 7 - 8:30 pm at the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center. The illustrated lecture is titled "How to Take Great Photos of the Wildflowers You Love" by professional photographer, Mark Turner.

Photographer Mark Turner will help you discover new ways to see wildflowers, to understand creative composition, how to separate subjects from

distracting backgrounds, and how to control natural light. The program runs about 90 minutes and is illustrated with numerous examples of Mark's photographs of wildflowers

from the Pacific Northwest. Mark Turner is the photographer and co-author of *Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest*, an award-winning book with over 24,000 copies in print. His next field guide, *Trees & Shrubs of the Pacific Northwest*, is due from the publisher in 2014. For more information, contact Susan Ballinger, Chapter co-chair, Wenatchee Chapter, Washington Native Plant Society. 669-7820 or skylinebal@gmail.com.

Learn to Photograph  
Wildflowers with the  
Native Plant Society  
March 27, 7 - 8:30 pm  
Wenatchee Valley Museum  
and Cultural Center

## Notes from Mazama

by Bob Spiwak, Mazama

This is the time of year to read. The holidays are over; the earth is covered with various coatings of snow, ice and mud. I am primarily interested in being immersed in tomes about the mid-19th century fur trade and it was quite by accident I came across *The Narrative of a Journey across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River and a Visit to the Sandwich Islands* (1839). It is written by John Kirk Townsend (as in warbler) and while it is principally about the mountain men, it also deals with identification of new avian and flora species across the continent from St. Louis westward. As a bonus, his companion was Thomas Nuttall (as in woodpecker), an English biologist and zoologist.

Concurrently I am reading Sigurd Olson's books. I just finished my third reading of *The Lonely Land*, and am now immersed in another reading of *The Singing Wilderness*. Olson lived in Ely, Minnesota, and his writings are of the far north and canoeing, the latter my favorite pastime. He has another book called *Listening Post* and at least half a dozen others.

Buried somewhere in a trunk or box in our barn are the four volumes of Edwin Way Teale depicting the travels of the author and his wife through the seasons. Excellent stuff.

The prize stories are from John Rowland's *Cache Lake Country* set in Maine. Each chapter is dedicated to a single

month. I don't know how much is true, but it is full of woodland lore and fun things like making a fishing rod out of a fencing foil, or snow goggles out of bark. This book is so enjoyable that it has been read to or by (or both) three generations in my family. Our original copy, page worn and ragged is now possessed by one of my daughters and I replaced it with another copy.

All the titles above have woodcuts or pencil sketches illustrating the subjects at hand, except Townsend's which is a diary or journal.

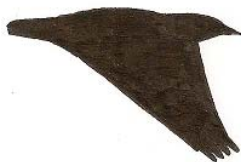
Here in the shadow of the Cascades we have the usual chickadees although not in the numbers that used to come, despite more feeders, and even a smaller group of jays than our accustomed number. At most, we see a pair of magpies, new to us this year, who continue to be seduced by remnants of canned dog food. A few woodpeckers, a flicker or two, one set of cougar prints, some deer. That's about it for a wildlife count other than the raven that got spoiled when we tossed dead mice out of the cars into the parking area. He cruises and circles a time or two each week when the cars are outside.

That's pretty much it now in mid-February. Hopefully we'll have bird song for April.

# AMCR vs CORA

Illustrated by Jenny Graevell, East Wenatchee

American Crow



Smaller Billed  
Short square tail  
Straight wing with little bending on the leading or trailing edge

Common Raven



Larger billed  
Longer necked  
Longer tail, usually wedge shaped  
"Hands" more swept back



Shorter, more rounded wings  
Wings are usually silent in flight  
Does not soar for extended periods  
Does not somersault in flight



Longer, more tapered wing tips  
Wings make swish, swish sound in flight  
Soars for extended periods  
Can somersault in flight



Thinner, shorter legs  
No shaggy neck feathers



Stronger, longer legs  
Shaggy, elongated pointed neck feathers



American Crow dives at a Merlin  
photo by Gregg Thompson

## Environmental Film Series - *Play Again*

The Environmental Film Series continues with *Play Again*, sponsored by NCW Audubon Society.

One generation from now most people in the U.S. will have spent more time in the virtual world than in nature. New media technologies have improved our lives in countless ways. Information now appears with a click. Overseas friends are part of our daily lives. And even grandma loves Wii. But what are we missing when we are behind screens? And how will this impact our children, our society, and eventually, our planet? At a time when children play more behind screens than outside, *Play Again* explores the changing balance between the virtual and natural worlds. Is our connection to nature disappearing down the digital rabbit

*Play Again*  
April 16, 7:00 pm  
Wenatchee Valley Museum  
and Cultural Center

hole? This moving and humorous documentary follows six teenagers who, like the "average American child," spend five to fifteen hours a day behind screens. *Play Again* unplugs these teens and takes them on their first wilderness adventure – no electricity, no cell phone coverage, no virtual reality.

Through the voices of children and leading experts including journalist Richard Louv, sociologist Juliet Schor, environmental writer Bill McKibben, educators Diane Levin and Nancy Carlsson-Paige,

neuroscientist Gary Small, parks advocate Charles Jordan, and geneticist David Suzuki, *Play Again* investigates the consequences of a childhood removed from nature and encourages action for a sustainable future.

# WenatcheeOutdoors

## Your Guide to Getting Out and About

article and photos by Andy Dappen, Wenatchee

WenatcheeOutdoors.org is an on-line magazine and community resource for outdoor recreationalists in Central Washington. The website offers an extensive body of 'Where-To' and 'How-To' information on areas located within an hour's drive of the Wenatchee Valley. That means it places a scope on the terrain between Blewett Pass and Brewster (north-south), and Stevens Pass and Vantage (west-east). The website also extends limited coverage north to the Methow Valley, south to the Teanaway River area, and east to Moses Lake.



For many, the most valued resources at WenatcheeOutdoors.org are the on-line guidebooks and the interactive adventure map, which graphically summarizes the guidebook information. The guidebooks have complete trip details for hundreds of routes, and include custom-made topographic maps. The on-line hiking guidebook, for example, covers 157 walks in Central Washington and is constantly growing through user-submitted trip reports. WenatcheeOutdoors.org also has guidebooks for mountain bikers (95 rides and maps), road riders (31 routes and maps), mountaineers (85 peaks and maps), rock climbers (30 crags and maps) backcountry skiers (99 destinations and maps), Nordic skiers (30 roads and trails), snowshoers (99 trips and maps), canoeists (14 paddle trips and maps), and naturalists (9 bird and wildflower walks).

For regional outdoor coverage, the information found at this website exceeds any other written guidebook or cyber resource. And the best part? It's free to all visitors. WenatcheeOutdoors.org is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and funds itself through a mixture of grants, sponsors, and donations.

So, what's the website's incentive? Those of us operating it believe playing outdoors is great for body and soul. We

also use muscle-powered adventure sports as a hook to the natural world because we think getting people active outdoors is one of the better ways to cultivate people who care about conservation.

The guidebook information at WenatcheeOutdoors is extensive, but there's much more to chronicle in this region, which is certainly one of the great outdoor centers of the country. There

are still many trails, peaks, crags, bike rides, birding outings, flower walks and more that we'd like to add to the resource. In addition, we hope to add more interpretive information on the geology, birds, plants, and other natural features that are unique to



each established route. Because all users can benefit from shared information, we encourage those of you who enjoy the outdoors to help us improve this community resource. Furthermore, it's just plain fun to see your contribution immortalized in print. Here's how to contribute:

- Contact Andy Dappen, the Content Editor, at [adappen@charter.net](mailto:adappen@charter.net) for the template listing the details we like to include with each route.
- Take photos of your suggested route.
- Email us (same address as above) written details and several photos.

We'll do the rest: edit, format the information, create a topographic map of the route, post the information on-line under your byline, and index your route in our guidebook.

Of course, the guidebooks are not the only content WenatcheeOutdoors.org seeks. As an on-line magazine we love to receive good natural history information, fun or adventurous stories, inspiring outdoor photography, condition reports, and more. Connect with us and become part of our outdoor community. There's no catch here -- if we can inspire you to share a love of the outdoors, we're getting exactly what we want out of the deal.

To visit, type [www.WenatcheeOutdoors.org](http://www.WenatcheeOutdoors.org) or [www.justgetout.net/wenatchee](http://www.justgetout.net/wenatchee).

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wenatchee, WA 98807

Post Office Box 2934

North Central Washington Audubon Society

*March Wild Phlox*

North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

March 16	Birding Buddies Bird Walk	At Horan Natural Area. See page 4
March 27	Learn to Photograph Flowers	With the Native Plant Society. See page 5
April 9	The Sage of Washington's Fish and Wildlife	The Methow Conservancy. See page 5
April 16	Wenatchee Environmental Film Festival	Play Again, sponsored by NCWAS, See page 6
April 20	Birding Buddies Bird Walk	The Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery. See page 4
May 7	Learn about White-headed Woodpeckers	Jeff Kozma comes to the Methow Conservancy's First Tuesday. More info coming.



Printed on Recycled Paper

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

NON-PROFIT  
PRESORTED STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
WENATCHEE, WA  
Permit No. 21