



Volume 46 #8 May 2013

by Jackie Haskins

Wenatchee River Institute

Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest May 16-19

The Eleventh Annual Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest, *Celebrating Birdsong and the Natural World*, returns May 16-19. Experience the Wenatchee River valley's prime bird migration in the midst of our peak wildflower season.

Sign up today for one of fifty expert-led field trips: birding by boat, bus, boot, or bike. Guides include master birders, fire ecologists, expert botanists, wildlife research biologists, and more.

Bird Fest offers activities for all ages, experience levels, and fitness levels. Included are bilingual events, family-friendly events, wheel-chair accessible events, rigorous off-trail advanced excursions, and events that integrate art and science. While pre-registration offers peace of mind, most trips also have last-minute walk-up slots; check the program for details.

Over a third of our activities are drop-in and completely free. Enjoy "Alive! Look a Bird in the Eye" with Sarvey Wildlife Center, bird banding with Puget Sound Bird Observatory, hands-on kids science activities with WRI Field Days, NCW Audubon's "What's That Bird," Daniel's Birdhouses, and more, at our Bird Discovery Center.

Our keynote lecture, "On the Trail of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker" is by

Celebrate Bird Song and the Natural World
at Leavenworth's Spring Bird Fest
May 16-19
www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com
548-7584

'the 20th Century Audubon,' John A. Ruthven; the keynote will be emceed by NWPR's Gillian Coldsnow. On Friday, BirdNote Science Advisor Idie Ulsh presents "Feathered Architects: The Fascinating World of Bird Nests," an informative but light-hearted program of interest to all ages, showcasing photographers from throughout the Northwest.

Enjoy refreshments and music at Thursday's "Birds and their Habitats" art opening at Icicle Arts, featuring many local artists. Don't miss music and dance at the gazebo, an art walk, the Songbird Concert at ICCA, bilingual community picnic with Team Naturaleza, and more.

Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest is made possible by generous donors; please thank our local businesses flying the yellow Bird Fest flag. It is also a cooperative effort by volunteers from many partner organizations, including Wenatchee River Institute, NCW Audubon Society, the Forest Service, USFWS, Icicle Arts,

Team Naturaleza, Washington Native Plant Society, Chelan Douglas Land Trust, Puget Sound Bird Observatory, Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Leavenworth.

To register, phone Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce, 548-5807. For a complete schedule and description of activities, pick up your festival program from the Chamber of Commerce or the Forest Service, or download one from our website, leavenworthspringbirdfest.com.

Our website features bird lists from previous years, and other information on birding around Leavenworth. To stay completely up to date, like us on facebook at www.facebook.com/LeavenworthSpringBirdFest.



Bird Fest program cover art: "Virginia Rail" by Leavenworth high school student Claire Sianna Seaman, created during Bird Fest 2012.

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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North Central Washington Audubon Society is on Facebook too

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

May Birding Buddies Walk Explores Badger Mountain

by Jenny Graevell, East Wenatchee

Come join Birding Buddies as we explore Badger Mountain on May 25th. The first 12 people to register will bird in some of Douglas County's birding hot spots; Indian Camp Road and Titchenal Canyon. Target birds include: Grasshopper Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Brewers Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, warblers, and flycatchers and White-throated Swifts. Please plan on a full day of birding. Bring a sack lunch, plenty of water and sunscreen. Dress in multiple layers as the mornings can be cold, and the afternoons quite warm. Wind is always possible at this higher elevation. We will be traveling on county gravel roads, so carpooling with higher ground clearance vehicles is suggested. Please let me know when registering if you can accept any passengers. We can expect to see great wildflowers and butterflies as well. Call Jenny at 886-4518.



Northern Harrier
 photo by Gregg Thompson

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 _____

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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.

Here at NCW Audubon Society, we are making some changes. One very obvious change will be our new website! We don't have a date for its completion but hopefully sometime soon. It will be a brand new design and more user friendly for you on that side of the computer and for the person who will keep it updated! It's very exciting for us and we hope you like it too. Going along with that, we will need a new person to be in charge of keeping the website updated. Torre is too busy to do it in the future. Do let us know (see all of our contact info right over there on page 2) if you are at all interested in this volunteer position. Yes, we are all volunteers. No professional staff. And yet when I see all the activities we are doing, all the educational programs, all the bird walks, the festivals where we participate – I am quite amazed at the strength of our volunteer corps! Thank you, one and all!

Another change, which you will read about in greater detail in the next Wild Phlox, is that we are moving towards electronic delivery of this newsletter. It's a hard thing coming from a person who loves getting a newspaper, even if it has to come in the mail and who eagerly awaits real snail mail from real people but indeed, it is the way of the future. As an organization that wants to protect habitat and also as a way to save money, it is the right thing to do. We have had requests for electronic delivery already so now we will begin to unroll that option out to you, the members of NCWAS. Watch for a story and a survey in the summer (paper) edition of the Wild Phlox. If all goes as planned, and the new website is up and running and the planets align at the right moment this summer, we will begin electronic distribution in September. Do you have any questions about this? Any suggestions? Do let us know! We want your input. And yes, you (and I) will have the **option** of getting a paper copy in the mail box.

Plans for the Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival are underway. We are lucky to have recruited Richard Scranton to be the chair of this fun event. You may remember that Richard used to edit this newsletter before I did. He is ready to return to NCWAS activities and we look forward to working with him again. September 14th is the date of the festival.

As part of the new website design, we need photos of local birds. Do you have any you want to share? We cannot offer you any money for their use but we will give credit to you.



Dusky Grouse and Marmot
photo by Julie Ashmore, Okanogan Highlands

NCW Recent Bird Sightings

compiled from ncwabird email list

Judging from the reports on ncwabird email list, many of the neotropical migrants have returned for the breeding season. Colorful plumage and come hither songs dot the landscape these days. Harlequin Ducks (does it get any more colorful than that?) have been reported on the Methow and Chewuch Rivers in Winthrop since early April. Stop at the bakery and sit outside and you may get a chance to see one in the rising water. A Trumpeter Swan was easily observed at a pond just south of Twisp on the county road. Dusky and Sooty Grouse have put on displays for just about anyone that had a chance to look for them. Gray-crowned Rosy-finches, more of a winter species, were reported well into April. The first Osprey in the Methow was reported April 12. No doubt they arrived much earlier in Wenatchee. Now they are busy nest building. At the Sun Mountain Beaver Pond, a pair of Canada Geese has taken over a traditional Osprey nest in a tall snag. I wonder if the Osprey will move in once the goslings tumble down the snag into the water far below. Cackling Geese were reported migrating over East Wenatchee on April 15. A Great Horned Owl is regularly seen in downtown Winthrop (across from the Carlos restaurant) and owl nestlings we can observe from our living room are growing

quickly. They will soon have real feathers and graduate to branchling status. Greater White-fronted Geese have been seen at Pearrygin Lake and also at Big Twin Lake. On April 21 I saw a flock of Snow Geese that dropped out of the sky with the approach of a sudden storm front. After the storm passed, they flew around the valley for a while before leaving for good. Avocets were reported in Douglas County on April 21. Winthrop residents report that Black-billed Magpies are eating adult birds! How unusual is that? And an angler observed an Osprey take a baby bird from a nest at Big Twin Lake. It's a bird-eat-bird world out there. Red-necked Grebes were seen at Curlew Lake in Ferry County and also at Patterson Lake in Okanogan County. Western Kingbirds have arrived all over our region. There was a very late report of a Rough-legged Hawk on May 3. That same day Western Tanagers and Bullock's Orioles were reported near Entiat. A variety of warblers are being seen now including scores of Yellow-rumped's, Nashville, Orange-crowned, and MacGillivray's. All the hummingbirds have returned including the Black-chinned. And just yesterday, May 6, a Poorwill was heard above Pearrygin Lake!

Feral Cats in Your Neighborhood?

What can you do about it?

by Heather Findlay, Okanogan

Living along the Okanogan River provides my partner Todd and me with a variety of bird species to enjoy. Last fall we noticed an adult cat with kittens walking through our yard. A nearby house had been vacant for some time and it appeared that these cats were living under it. The prior tenant had had multiple cats and when she moved she left one or more behind. This spring we noticed several of these cats down by the river skulking about and stalking birds among the riparian shrubs. Outside our back windows at our bird feeders we could see up to three cats at a time hiding in the shrubbery, hoping for a finch or sparrow. We would find little piles of feathers in our outbuildings.

It was evident that a feral cat colony was killing birds in our yard. We knew the colony would expand very quickly unless we intervened. We learned that the Okanogan Spay and Neuter Project (OK-SNIP) had been closed due to lack of funding but would re-open on February 26, World Spay and Neuter Day. I went in and discussed our feral cat situation. If we could trap the cats, they could be spayed or neutered then moved to Okanogan Animal Foster Care cat shelter for adoption. So we began to feed the cats, gradually moving the food bowls closer to our house and eventually into our carport. After several weeks we were able to get the cats on the schedule for a spay/neuter day at OK-SNIP. They loaned us five humane traps. We fed the cats for several days with the traps propped open to get the cats used to going inside. On the evening prior to “snip day” we placed some tuna in oil inside the cage. Eventually each of the cats went inside and the trap closed. I loaded them up and took the cats to OK-SNIP.

As it turned out, the friendliest cat was fairly advanced in pregnancy so an OK-SNIP volunteer took her home to await the arrival of the kittens. Subsequently all these cats would be spayed/neutered and adopted out to responsible owners. We learned that after a few weeks the other four feral cats have been unable to become socialized and will therefore need to be adopted out as barn cats. This is not an ideal solution because those cats will now be relocated to somewhere where they can again hunt.

While the OK-SNIP and Okanogan Foster Care option is not ideal, at least we were able to remove the feral cats from our bird-friendly backyard. We have multiple nesting pairs of birds who come to our place year after year. Not long from now we will be seeing proud avian parents strutting about with their little families of quail, goslings and ducklings. We have a Wood Duck box down by the river and it looks like it may be an active nesting box this year. We love our indoor kitty... **but outdoors, birds rule.**

If anyone is looking for an indoor pet cat, or needs a barn cat, then please contact Okanogan Animal Foster Care at 422-3364. OK-SNIP is 422-9960 should you or someone you know want to access the cat spay/neuter program. These programs also depend on donations and we will be making ongoing contributions. I would encourage others to donate so that these spay/neuter services can continue.

A page from Jenny's Field Journal

Do you use journaling to record your bird and other natural history experiences? How has it helped you to learn the species you see when you are out and about? What techniques do you use? Pencil, pen, watercolors? Something else?

Would you like to share your journal pages with NCW Audubon members? If so, send us a photo or scan of one of your pages and we will feature it in an upcoming Wild Phlox.



June Birding Buddies in Leavenworth

by Ann Schaechtel, Leavenworth

In June, the Birding Buddies will move to the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery and will be hosted by Don and Ann Schaechtel. We should see the late migrants in addition to earlier migrants and resident birds. We will look for Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds; the swallows will put on an ID clinic; we'll work on warbler songs; and maybe a White-headed Woodpecker will join other woodpeckers in the area. A Gray catbird is likely and, if we're lucky, we may hear a Veery or a Yellow-breasted Chat. The outing will be on Saturday, June 8 from 8 to 11 am. Birders of all experience levels are welcome on this low-key walk. You must pre-register as the group is limited to the first 15 people. If you have questions or want to register, please contact the Schaechtels at 548-9967 or ann.schaechtel@nwi.net.

Local Shrub-Steppe Habitat gets National Prioritization!

by Trina Bayard, Ph.D.
Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Washington

I'm pleased to announce that two Washington state Important Bird Areas (IBA's) have been selected as part of a national process to prioritize IBA conservation and protection. A total of 23 sites were selected for the program, including five international sites, so we're feeling pretty good about our inclusion! Criteria for the program included measurable conservation outcomes within the next three to five years, network-building potential, and strengthening flyway priorities.

Christie Norman and I worked together last fall to rank and nominate IBAs for this program, resulting in our decision to combine individual IBAs supporting similar habitats and birds into two large IBA clusters. We designated these clusters as "Washington Coastal Estuaries" and "Washington Shrub Steppe":

- Washington Coastal Estuaries including Bottle Beach, Bowerman Basin, Center Islands, Damon Point/Oyhut, Elk River Estuary, Humptulips Estuary, Leadbetter Point, Sand and Gunpowder Islands, South and North Willapa Bay.
- Washington Shrub Steppe including Columbia National Wildlife Refuge, Douglas Creek, Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve, Hanford Reach, North Potholes Preserve, Potholes Reservoir, Quilomene-Colockum Wildlife Area, Toppenish Creek/Yakima River Oxbows, Yakima Training Center, Leahy Junction-Moses Coulee.

We are still learning how our participation in this program will help us advance conservation in these critical areas and hope to have more specifics soon. In the meantime, check

out the new IBA maps that are now up and running on the national website: web4.audubon.org/bird/iba/. Additional information on the prioritization process: web4.audubon.org/bird/iba/SavingIBAs.html

Thanks again to all of the people who helped establish these important IBAs in the first place.

Editor's note – NCWAS Science Officer Don McIvor developed nominations for the most recent round of Washington IBA's and stewarded those nominations through the state review process, concluding in 2010. Several of those nominations captured critically important Eastern Washington landscapes. Three of the shrub-steppe IBA's are in our four-county region. They are Douglas Creek, Quilomene-Colockum Wildlife Area and Leahy Junction-Moses Coulee.

Seeing an Old Favorite

by Marilyn Strickwereda, Chelan

Chris and I were winners of a "Winthrop Getaway" sponsored by AAA Washington. We spent two wonderful days (April 18-19) in the Methow Valley exploring the beauty of the North Cascades and Washington Pass (Highway 20 opened on April 16) along with hiking and bird watching on the Sun Mountain Interpretive Loop Trail.

The low pulsing hoots whoof whoof whoof whoof whoof of the male Blue (probably Dusky) Grouse, gave away the hiding place of not only the male but also the female.

The last time we had seen a male Blue Grouse was on May 29, 2006, while we were hiking the trails at Echo Ridge in Chelan.

Editor's note – According to field guide author David Sibley, the Blue Grouse was split into two species – Dusky and Sooty – in 2006.



Female Dusky Grouse
Photographed by the Strickwerda's

A Red-winged Blackbird Advertises

Iridescent in springtime black
he balances on a reed
and pours the message
into his song, empties himself
into sunlight, flaunts
his scarlet epaulets.
Around his territory
he posts his claim,
and calls the ladies
with note and trill:

“It’s all mine,
come share, waterfront,
nest fully lined.
Together we’ll raise
broods and broods
of healthy fledglings.
food supply is limitless,
and summer, I promise you,
will never end.”

Poem by Jess Mills, Wenatchee
A tribute to Spring,
Hooray for the birds!

Methow Naturalist Plans Methow Bird Count

by Dana Visalli, Methow Valley

There is a migratory bird count in the Methow Valley on May 19th. This was formerly part of a nationwide effort organized by some guy in New Jersey, but it has degenerated into just a fun day for those who want to participate. The last few years there have been very few of us. I plan to start out at the confluence of the Methow and Columbia at 5:30 am and hit the valley hot spots heading upstream. I always want to make it to Washington Pass but typically poop out in mid-afternoon. If anyone wants to join me let me know - I can meet people at the confluence early, or at the Cinnamon Twisp bakery at about 8 am. The special thing about the count to me is that one becomes a bit of a ‘hunter’ for the day, very tuned in to birds. Contact me at dana@methownet.com or 997-9011 if you are interested in this count.

Okanogan Spring Bird A Thon

by Heather Findlay, Okanogan

The annual Okanogan Spring Birdathon is scheduled for June 1st. Meet at Todd and Heather’s house at 2050 James Avenue at 6:45 am. We try to leave at 7:00 am sharp. Bring binoculars, lunch and your sharp eyes and ears. Last year we blasted past our prior record ... and if memory serves, we saw 109 species. There was a fun, late afternoon bonanza up at Green and Brown Lakes that took us over the top. Woo hoo! But more important than the number of bird species we see is the time we spend with old friends and new friends, touring around Okanogan County, enjoying the beauty of the various habitats and searching high and low for whatever birds we can see. We do try to carpool... and can accommodate varied schedules if folks only want to join for part of the day. For more information contact Heather at 429-8167 heather@eaglesun.net

Phenology and Other Activities at the Basecamp

by Steve Bondi, Mazama

Spring typically comes to Mazama about 10 days later than mid to lower Methow Valley locations like Winthrop and Twisp. This year it seems like spring has come earlier everywhere! Nonetheless, here at the North Cascades Basecamp the glacier lilies faded two weeks ago, the serviceberry that usually flower the week after Mother’s Day are peaking this week before Mother’s Day, and the Western Tanagers have yet to arrive. Seasonal highlights so far include an adult Northern Goshawk stalking Pine Siskins at the feeder, an otter pursuing fish in the spring ponds, two turkeys (!) strutting down the neighbors driveway, and a habitual snowshoe hare (all brown except for heels of its hind feet) chewing grass in front of the lodge.

We love May because it is the busiest month of year, ornithologically speaking. It seems like new birds are arriving daily (Nashville Warblers and Cassin’s Vireos yesterday; Chipping Sparrows and Townsend’s Warblers today) while many birds like juncos and robins are busy preparing nests or sitting on eggs. Barred Owl fledglings are learning to hunt in the cedar woodlands by the ponds. All of this seems to correspond with mysterious eruptions in food

supplies - insect hatches in particular - that seem to follow flower phenology. Somebody should write a book about these trends!

The Basecamp has several exciting programs coming up in the next few months including:

May 24-27. Nature in Art and Science: A field journaling~naturalist workshop with Hannah Hinchman and Bruce Thompson. Educator clock hours available.

July 29-Aug 1. Treasured Landscapes of the Majestic Methow Valley. Join the National Forest Foundation, North Cascades Basecamp, and the US Forest Service for a week long adventure of learning and exploring birds and plants, beavers, wolverines, and native plant restoration projects throughout the upper Methow Valley. For more information and to register, see the National Forest Foundation’s website at <http://www.nationalforests.org/offices/wa>.

August 16-18. Butterflies of the North Cascades Workshop with Robert Michael Pyle. Educator clock hours available.

For more information or to register, call 996-2334 or email info@northcascadesbasecamp.com

Seeing the Forest Among the Trees

From the Panorama to the Patch, How do People fit?

by Julie Ashmore, Okanogan Highlands

Renowned Forest Ecologist, Herb Hammond, will kick off the Okanogan Highlands Alliance Summer Highland Wonders series with a unique perspective on Okanogan Highlands ecology. This will be the first OHA educational event that combines an evening indoor presentation with a field trip the following day, providing the best of both venues for maximum learning and enjoyment.

Herb will discuss the composition, structure and function of our local forest ecosystems, making spatial connections between the greater landscape and the close-up patch of land, as well as temporal connections about how forest ecosystems function through time. Herb will introduce Ecosystem-Based Conservation Planning (EBCP) as a way of thinking about and relating to the forest as a dynamic system, creating solutions that go beyond the old ways of industrialized forestry, fostering roles for people as a respectful part of a holistic approach. EBCP is necessary if concepts like sustainable resource management are to be other than advertising slogans. "Ecosystem-Based Conservation Planning has relevance in our day-to-day lives as well as in plans for major land use activities," Herb says. "Facilitating diverse community-based economies is an important part of an ecosystem-based conservation plan."

This educational event will convey how changes in temperature and moisture affect forests and explain how the ecosystem-based approach to planning can also help mitigate the stresses and impacts of climate change. A broad perspective will be shared on forest diversity and ecology, and how various human land uses are supported by ecosystems.

Herb Hammond is a Registered Professional Forester and forest ecologist with 35 years experience in research, industry, teaching and consulting. He holds a Bachelor of Science in forest management from Oregon State University and a Masters of Forestry from the University of Washington. Hammond is well known for his development

and application of ecosystem-based conservation planning, which he defines as the protection and ecologically responsible use of ecosystems through all scales of time and space. He has worked for many years with First Nations and other rural communities to develop ecosystem-based conservation plans.

Hammond is a founding member of the Silva Forest Foundation, a non-profit organization devoted to research and education in ecosystem-based planning and ecologically responsible forest use. He also heads Silva Ecosystem Consultants Ltd. Both organizations specialize in the development and implementation of ecosystem-based conservation plans. The Silva Forest Foundation was Canada's first Forest Stewardship Council accredited certifier. In 2003, Herb received the Gold Award for Sustainable Living at the Canadian Environmental Awards.

Hammond delivers keynote speeches, slide presentations, and workshops throughout North America and around the world. He is the author of the award-winning book *Seeing the Forest Among the Trees: The Case for Wholistic Forest Use* (Polestar Press) and co-author of *Community Guide to the Forest*. Hammond writes extensively for scientific publications and the popular press. His most recent book, *Maintaining Whole Systems on Earth's Crown: Ecosystem-based Conservation Planning for the Boreal Forest* was released in March, 2009.

"Seeing the Forest Among the Trees," will take place on Friday, June 28 (indoor evening presentation) and Saturday, June 29 (field trip). The presentation and field trip are offered free of charge with donations welcome, and OHA members will receive priority registration. The locations for this event will be announced as the date approaches. Pre-registration is required for the field trip and space is limited. Please visit okanoganhighlands.org/education/hw for more information or contact julie@okanoganhighlands.org or call 433-7893

Native Plant Society Walks Planned

The Washington Native Plant Society has chapters in both the Okanogan and Wenatchee areas and both groups have a diverse calendar of native plant walks planned for this spring and summer. Space restrictions prevent us from listing them here so if you are interested in native plant walks (and you will see birds too!) please see their websites - www.okanogannativeplants.org/p/field-trips-2013.html and www.wnps.org/chapter_info/wenatchee/home.html. The listings rate the walks for difficulty and also give a description of expected species. They are led by knowledgeable naturalists and offer participants a fine learning experience in the field.



Lupine next to the Lewis Butte trail
photo by Teri J Pieper

May Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

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|------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| May 16-19 | Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest | Celebrate Bird Song and the Natural World. See page 1 for more information |
| May 19 | Methow Spring Bird Count | Count birds from the Columbia to the Cascade Crest. See page 6 for more information |
| May 25 | Birding Buddies Walk | Bird Badger Mountain! See page 2 for more info |
| May 24-28 | Nature Journal Workshop | With Hannah Hinchman and Bruce Thompson! See page 6 for more information |
| June 1 | Okanogan Spring Bird a Thon | Bird the Okanogan with the locals! See page 6 for more information |
| June 8 | Birding Buddies Walk | At the Leavenworth Hatchery! See page 5 for more information |
| June 28 | Seeing the Forest Among the Trees | With the Okanogan Highlands Alliance. See page 7 for more information |
| July 12-15 | National Audubon Convention | A great opportunity in the Columbia Gorge to learn more about Audubon and birds from great speakers such as Kenn Kaufman! See www.audubonconvention.org for more info |



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