



Volume 42 #5 February 2009

## The Great Backyard Bird Count

by Mark Oswood

Slippery roads and a dark evening – yikes! Not ideal for convening a program in Wenatchee (or anywhere else). No matter ... February is the month for **The Great Backyard Bird Count**. The GBBC is a kind of laid back, less strenuous version of the Christmas Bird Count. I suspect that nearly all of the members of North Central Washington Audubon Society (about 400 of us) do some casual birding every day: watching birds at our backyard feeders, walking the dog around the neighborhood, or sitting on a bench in the park, having a mug of coffee. These are just the kind of birding observations needed for the GBBC. Like the CBC, the observations you make and report are important – a warning system for changes in abundances of species or changes in distribution (e.g., related to climate change). The GBBC (and CBC) are some of the best examples of citizen science ... and a way of pooling our observations so that we can each contribute importantly to a large and growing project.

How does the GBBC work? The details are on the flyer inserted in this issue of the Phlox. Here are the basics:

- Check out the website [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) for instructions, checklists, and inspiration. Not connected to the web? No problem (see offer below).
- Over the four days from February 13-16, watch (for at least 15 minutes) and count the birds you see (highest number of individuals of each species you see at one time). You can watch and count for any or all of the four days (each day is a separate count). You can do your watching at the same place on multiple days ... or at different places.
- Report your results online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) (again, see below for the “paper option”). You can view the composite

counts, for your city or area, in real time (sort of like election returns).

- You can also submit digital images of birds you see (or people doing the GBBC) to the GBBC website (see the wonderful photos on the flyer). Are you a film photographer instead of a digital photographer? We can do this too – see below.



second year Bald Eagle  
photo by Teri J Pieper

So, what if you aren't fond of computers or aren't connected to the internet or don't even have a computer? We can do this all with paper. Just send me a note, at the NCWAS PO Box, asking for the “paper GBBC package.” I'll mail you instructions, a bird checklist, and four copies of the reporting form (one for each day, in case you do all four days). When you're done, mail the forms back to me (I'll enclose a return envelope). I'll enter your data at the GBBC website. If you are a film photographer and have taken some photos

of GBBC birds or activities, just send me your print(s) or slide(s). I'll scan them, submit the digital images for you, and send the prints or slides back to you. However – if you have taken a spectacular photo or a photo that has deep personal meaning to you, send me copies (you keep the originals); I don't want to have to flee the country if your photos are lost or damaged.

We will compile a bird listing for the regions and whole of our NCWAS territory: Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan and Ferry counties. In a Phlox this spring, we'll let you know what we all saw – how many species, any species of special note, and distributions of species over our territory. The GBBC website will show us the birds and number of checklists submitted for every town, city and place. So, let's make an impressive showing – lots of lists from all over our territory.



Daniel S. Kilby

**North Central Washington  
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a local chapter of the  
National Audubon Society,  
is dedicated to furthering  
the knowledge and the  
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North Central Washington,  
our Nation, and the World.**

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## Editor's Note

It was with great sadness that I learned of Jon Soest's ill health and untimely death at the end of 2008. Jon served for many years as the NCW Audubon Conservation Chair earning many accolades for his tireless work on conservation issues around North Central Washington. He leaves behind a loving wife and countless friends who miss him dearly. No one is likely to fill the shoes of the conservation chair position as he did for our Chapter. Perhaps, in his honor, all of us ought to find an issue near and dear to our hearts and follow it, learn the processes that might improve a situation, and get involved with those processes. Go to meetings, make comments, meet elected officials and agency employees, and learn how to influence the system in a meaningful way. President Obama said in his inaugural address, "What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility – a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task. This is the price and promise of citizenship." His words rang true with me and reminded me once again of my responsibilities as a citizen of this region, state, country. We are all busy with our personal lives, jobs, families but when I think of how much of Jon's retirement years were spent doing the work of conservation, I think that all of us should be able to squeeze some time out of our busy schedule to help make this world a better place.



### North Central Washington Audubon Society One Year Membership Form

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Membership in National Audubon includes NCW Audubon membership and Audubon magazine six times per year and The Wild Phlox nine times per year. Make check payable to Audubon; mail to Post Office Box 2934 Wenatchee, WA 98807-2934.

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## 75 Acres of Wenatchee Foothills to Remain Open Space

The Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) and The Trust for Public Land (TPL) recently purchased a key 75-acre property in the Wenatchee Foothills from Bob and Bonnie Oldwyn. The property lies along the western edge of Wenatchee's urban growth boundary, between the city and the Horse Lake portion of the Foothills, with stunning views of the valley. The Foothills are part of the fabric that makes Wenatchee special, providing miles of trails that start right at the city's back door, giving access to adjoining public lands, and vital connecting habitat for wildlife. This area of the Foothills was identified in last year's *Wenatchee Watershed Vision* report as having a high development probability, and the City of Wenatchee's recent Foothills Study showed that the vast majority of

Wenatchee residents do not want to see high density development creep up into the Wenatchee Foothills. The Oldwyn's considered developing the property last year, but decided instead to sell it to CDLT, ensuring that it will be available for the enjoyment of the community. The property has excellent recreation potential, with possible linkage to the Foothills Trail. This also factored into the Oldwyn's decision to sell to the Land Trust. TPL, a national conservation organization with offices in Wenatchee and Seattle, partnered with CDLT to complete this important acquisition.

*editor's note - The Wenatchee Watershed Vision report can be found at the website for The Trust for Public Land, [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)*

## Upper Valley Trails Planning Process Moving Forward

The City of Leavenworth is taking the lead in developing a regional trails plan for the upper valley area of the Wenatchee River. An open house to review and get public input on the preliminary alternatives for the trails plan was held on January 14, 2009, at the Leavenworth Fire Hall. The trails plan will integrate existing planning efforts and connect neighborhoods, residents, and visitors with area services, activity centers, attractions, and natural areas. The planning effort is made possible by a \$50,000 state grant and is being led by a steering committee representing various recreational interests, including the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust. The preliminary alternatives were developed using input provided by the community and the steering committee. The preliminary alternatives will be available for review and comment on the City's project website, [www.cityofleavenworth.com/trailsplanmeeting.htm](http://www.cityofleavenworth.com/trailsplanmeeting.htm) with comments accepted through January 30th.

## Entiat River Snowshoe and Ski Tour February 14 Winter Ecology and Backyard Bird Count

Learn about the winter ecology of the area, examine the tracks and trails left by wandering mammals, and participate in **The Great Backyard Bird Count** at the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust's Stormy Creek Preserve with Phil Archibald and Kim Lohse, followed by soup and apple cider at their house. No birding expertise required - we will learn about the birds of the Stormy Creek Preserve while collecting important baseline data. RSVP required; please contact the Land Trust office (509-667-9708) to let us know if can join us. Wear warm layered clothing; bring skis or snowshoes (whichever you prefer), water, a snack, and food to go with the soup for lunch. Meet either at the Easy Street Park and Ride at 8:30 a.m. to carpool, or at Phil and Kim's house at 9:30.



Northern Pygmy Owl  
photo by Chris Strickwerda

## Chelan-Douglas Land Trust Volunteer Opportunities

**Riparian Restoration and Upland Tree Planting** along the Entiat River, late March, right after the snow melts at CDLT's Cottonwood Reserve. Date to be determined by Mother Nature. CDLT will continue restoration efforts on the Entiat River properties with a work party to plant trees and shrubs, restoring riparian and upland habitats.

**Mule Deer Study**, April and May at Wenatchee Foothills and Horse Lake Reserves. Volunteers are needed to help

lay out transects as part of a long term study of deer habitat selection in the Wenatchee Foothills. This will involve walking four to five miles cross country on steep, uneven terrain. A hand-held GPS and compass will be helpful.

If you are interested in working on either of these projects, please contact Neal Hedges, CDLT Stewardship Coordinator at the Land Trust office, 509-667-9708.

**February 2009 Wild Phlox**

North Central Washington Audubon Society

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**North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar**

February 13-16	Great Backyard Bird Count	Count Birds at Home or Away. See Page One for Details!
February 14	Entiat ski and snowshoe tour and Backyard Bird Count	Visit the Land Trust Stormy Creek Preserve See page 3 for details
February 17	Film: Edge of Eden: Living with Grizzlies	Environmental Film Series, 7:00 pm, Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center. Call the Museum for more info, 888-6240
February 9 - March 16	A Bird's-Eye View of the Methow: the Ecology and Conservation of Birds	The Methow Conservancy 2009 Conservation Course. See <a href="http://www.methowconservancy.org">www.methowconservancy.org</a> or contact Mary at <a href="mailto:info@methowconservancy.org">info@methowconservancy.org</a> or 509-996-2870
May 14 - 17	Leavenworth Spring BirdFest	The annual celebration of the return of neotropical migratory birds to the Wenatchee River Valley
June 6 and 7	NCW Audubon goes north	A field trip to the Methow Valley. Mark your calendars.



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Visit the NCW Audubon Society website for updates on these and other events [www.ncwaudubon.org](http://www.ncwaudubon.org)