



NCW Audubon March Program

Volume 43 #6 March 2010

## Washington's Family Forests and Wildlife

by Andy Perleberg

Join us Thursday, March 11 to learn about Washington's Family Forests and Wildlife. Doors open at the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center 7:00 pm and the program begins at 7:30.

Between the lowland riparian forests that support birds like McGillivray's Warblers, winter wrens, and ruffed grouse and the public forests managed in trust for the State and counties, lies a critical belt of forestland owned by people like you and me. Sometimes identified with "NO TRESSPASSING," "PRIVATE PROPERTY," or other love letters, these young and old forest stands are the buffer between the urban centers of Wenatchee and Leavenworth and the alpine forests of Mission Ridge and Stevens Pass.

Sometimes they are recognized by praiseworthy signs, indicating they are a "Washington Stewardship Forest," a designation which comes with managing under a state-approved Forest Stewardship Plan. Sometimes a green and white diamond-shaped "Tree Farm" sign alerts you that you are passing by a forest which is certified internationally for sustainable forest management practices.

More often, you grimace at the garbage, old appliances, or yard refuse people dump at their gates.

Understand and appreciate or not, families and individuals steward 25% of the total forestland in Washington State. These 215,000 owners control 5.8 million acres of land, making them the largest private land use group in the state. These forestlands make critical contributions to public amenity and commodity values – they are essential for clean air and water, wildlife habitat and for the economic vitality of rural communities, family livelihoods, quality of life, ecosystem viability, and aesthetic beauty. Due to historical settlement patterns, these forests are often located in the lowland watersheds adjacent to rivers and streams, and they significantly contribute to water quality protection and salmon recovery.

But they face considerable challenges

and risk of being converted out of forestry use. Current and pending challenges include changing land use regulations, intergenerational land ownership transfers, shifting and diminishing commodity markets, and skyrocketing land values. Now more than ever it is important for communities to recognize and support the owners of these family forests.

On March 11, WSU Extension Forester Andy Perleberg and Dept. of Natural Resources Stewardship Wildlife Biologist Jim Bottorff will provide an interesting look at family forests and their owners, and what they do to steward wildlife and their habitats for their own benefit and for society. The program will be at the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center at 7:30. Join us afterward for refreshments and stimulating conversation.



photo provided



Evening Grosbeak  
photo by Teri J Pieper



Daniel S. Kilby

There's no doubt about it. Spring has arrived a full month early around North Central Washington. The signs are everywhere. In Wenatchee temperatures are reaching 50°. Here in the Methow, south facing slopes have lost much of their snow and mud season is in full force in many places. Ski trails on the valley floor are no longer being groomed. The shimmering spring green of the cheat grass is beginning to coat the hillsides. Those of us that enjoy winter are sad to see it go but spring brings its own joys; hopefully they won't be short-lived.

**The mission of North Central Washington Audubon 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."**

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Yesterday on the ski trail, I enjoyed the sounds of singing Black-capped Chickadees and Pileated Woodpeckers calling back and forth across the river while American Dippers dipped and chased up and down the river. House and Goldfinch numbers at our feeders have dropped recently, perhaps indicating that there is abundant food available with last year's seed heads emerging from the snowmelt. Surprisingly the Says Phoebes have not yet returned. Last year they were here around the first of February. And I have been expecting bluebirds any day. I remember that last year, Libby reminded me that hummingbirds might show up as early as March 1 so it's time to get those feeders cleaned and at the ready. Another Spring time task is cleaning out the nest boxes!

Spring means new beginnings throughout the natural world. Perhaps it's time for a new beginning in your world too. Your Chapter of the Audubon Society needs some new volunteers to help out on the board. See page four for ideas where you might be able to contribute some of your time. We don't ask much; tasks can mostly be done on your own schedule and we only meet three or four times a year. Much 'meeting' type work gets done via email. When we do meet, it's always a great time to catch up with old friends and find out about their most recent adventures. Why don't you join us?

*Since writing this, we've noticed Says Phoebes around our place.*

**North Central Washington Audubon Society  
 Membership Form**

\_\_\_\_\_ Subscribe to NCW Audubon Wild Phlox One Year, Nine Issues \$15

\_\_\_\_\_ Donation: I would like to support NCW Audubon's programs of education and conservation. Enclosed is my additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ New Membership to National Audubon Society (NAS), includes one year Wild Phlox, \$20

(Renewals - Please renew your National Audubon Membership by filling out the forms sent to you by National and sending directly to NAS, thank you)

Make check payable to Audubon; mail to Post Office Box 2934 Wenatchee, WA 98807-2934.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Code C9ZY100Z

# Local Cub Scouts Creating New Bluebird Trails

by Ed Faust

Cub Pack 3 of North Central Washington Council of the Boy Scouts of America in Wenatchee, led by Tony Talbot, made and donated eight Bluebird boxes to the Audubon Society. With some guidance by an Audubon birder, they placed the boxes on fence posts along a road on Wenatchee Heights.

After the Cub Scouts helped with the placement of the new boxes in November 2009, they also helped clean out the old boxes for this year's nesting. A full range of questions and answers by the boys created a better understanding for the

need and care of bird boxes for nesting.

The Cub Pack is planning another Bluebird trail adventure on Badger Mountain this spring. These activities will help the boys earn a Conservation Badge which is one of the few awards that they can wear later on their Boy Scout uniforms.

To learn more about the project or find another scout group that could use some assistance in starting a Bluebird trail or other bird-related project, contact the Wenatchee office of the Boy Scouts of America at 509-662-5501.

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# Local Birder is Awarded National Honor for his Volunteer Work

by Nikki Price  
HawkWatch International

HawkWatch International (HWI) is pleased to announce Richard Hendrick as our 2009 Volunteer of the Year. Richard has volunteered for over 13 years at the Chelan Ridge Raptor Migration Project in Washington State, where HWI has partnered with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) since 1998. Richard donates over 200 hours of time each season, helping with site set up and take down, trail maintenance, and filling in at count observations, which allows crew members much needed time off. Richard was nominated by HWI partner Kent Woodruff, USFS.

The Volunteer of the Year award was established to recognize the outstanding contributions that volunteers have historically made and continue to make to enhance the work of HawkWatch International and partners.

Nominations are solicited from staff, board, crew leaders, and partners and voted on by staff. The nominees are volunteers that have gone above and beyond expectations. They give freely of their time, their homes, their passion, and their camaraderie. All the staff and board at HWI would like to thank Richard Hendrick and all our volunteers for their tireless dedication to monitoring and conserving birds of prey.

HawkWatch International is a Salt Lake City-based nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving the environment through education, long-term monitoring, and scientific research on raptors as indicators of ecosystem health.

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# Uses for eBird in NCW

by Susan Ballinger

Cornell Lab of Ornithology offers a citizen's science program called eBird. eBird's goal is to maximize the utility and accessibility of the vast numbers of bird observations made each year by recreational and professional bird watchers. eBird documents the presence or absence of species, as well as bird abundance through checklist data. A birder enters when, where, and how they went birding, then fills out a checklist of all the birds seen and heard during the outing at pre-set points.

Heather Wallis Murphy, first in her capacity as a USFS employee, and now as a volunteer, has been an early advocate for eBird in our region. She was instrumental in establishing the Upper Basin Birder's eBird project, gathering data at a number of points in the upper Wenatchee Watershed over consecutive years. Heather is also gathering and inputting birding data for Chelan-Douglas Land Trust's Mountain Home Ridge property as well as entering past data for Stehekin where she was Artist-in-Residence for the North Cascades National Park.

A new eBird 8-point route has just been established for Wenatchee's Number Two Canyon. A wide shrub-steppe riparian corridor borders four miles of paved road up the canyon utilized in spring by neotropical migrants. This canyon is part of the greater Wenatchee Foothills region and to-date, very limited bird data is available for this urban interface area. Starting in February 2010, monthly observations will be made (bi-monthly during migratory bird breeding season). Anyone interested in joining the observation team can contact Susan Ballinger (509-664-8955; skylinebal@gmail.com). In past years, over 40 species have been observed using this lush multi-storied riparian corridor during May. The eBird protocol will allow us to document and conserve this important shrub-steppe habitat type.

You can visit all these sites by going to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org) then click on "View & Explore Data" and then check out Chelan County in Washington State.

# Audubon Looking for Help - 2nd Notice

by NCW Audubon Board

NCWAS President Mark Oswood has done a wonderful job in his role as our leader for many years. He has come to the realization (with the help of his wife, Judy) that he needs to devote time to many other aspects of his interesting life. With that in mind, May will be his last month serving as President; as well as Secretary, Program Chair, Membership Chair and Chief Fund Raiser Extraordinaire. We all owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for the outstanding work he has done to promote birds, education and conservation in North Central Washington. Plus, he probably writes the best e-mails of anyone around. This good thing is coming to an end.

Assuming that we find some folks to step into some of his many shoes, Mark would like to continue working on Education for NCWAS and also serve as Webmaster. And in the event that Mark takes on the job as Webmaster, Karen Haire is looking forward to taking on the position of Field Trip Chair, bringing new and exciting field trips to all of us.

Now we need some people to step up to the role of NCWAS leadership in many ways. At present, none of the current Board members are able to take on additional positions. Therefore we are offering Audubon members the opportunity to move into some of Mark's leadership roles.

It's very important that we all realize that without a willing and able President and board there will no longer be a North Central Washington Audubon Society as we know it. Audubon in our region truly is approaching a crisis due to this upcoming void. We, the remaining members of the board, appeal to any of you who might be interested in helping us avoid fading into the twilight, to step up and take over one or more of these Audubon tasks.

Bare

1.  
There is lonesomeness  
for snow that arrives early  
then cedes its battles.
2.  
Suet cages dangle  
deserted quiet empty  
in the orchard trees.

Gloria Piper Roberson

In addition to the office of president, here are some other jobs Mark has done so well over the years that NEED to be filled by the end of May. Mark will offer hands-on training to all volunteers!

**Program Chair:** In the recent past we have offered an eclectic mix of speakers (from conservation to travelogues to how-to backyard habitat) to films to social birding to a few workshops. We've joined with the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center, Chelan Douglas Land Trust and with Barn Beach Reserve in jointly sponsoring some programs. We agreed at our August 2009 board meeting that "All things Bird" should be our focus in the future. Also we will offer fewer programs - probably four per year. Sometimes programs arrive on their own - someone emails or calls to volunteer to give a program - but most presenters have to be invited. Once a date and topic is agreed upon, publicity is generated with articles in the Phlox and any other publications (printed or electronic) available. Venues must be arranged for and organized for the program.

**Secretary/Gofer/Admin:** This position includes a variety of small tasks needed to keep things flowing. Handling mailings including the Phlox, pick up and distribute mail from the PO, the traditional secretary task of recording meeting notes and producing meeting minutes, occasional trips to office supply store, mostly for mailing supplies, bank deposits, generate chapter stationary (letterhead, thank-you cards etc.) and mailing labels

**Fund Raising:** Our major source of revenue in recent years has been our annual donation appeal letter.

**Membership:** We keep our membership (and donor) records in a dedicated membership software package, Member Ties.

# Birding with Dan on the Waterville Plateau

Article and photo  
by Susan Fishburn

The 18th annual NCW Audubon Waterville Plateau field trip to Douglas County to look for wintering birds led by Dan Stephens, Ph.D., Wenatchee Valley College ornithologist, was held Saturday, February 6, 2010. Fourteen intrepid NCW birders from Leavenworth, Cashmere and the greater Wenatchee area made the 245-mile dawn to dusk round trip (from Leavenworth and back). Meredith Spencer and Rick Hendrick, Douglas County birders, also participated in the field trip, graciously willing to share their expertise and local knowledge.

As usual, the weather provided interesting challenges that included light rain, snow showers and numerous sunbreaks, with temperatures in the thirties and forties. The El Nino effect was evident in the lack of any significant snow on the roads and vast wheat fields surrounding the northern communities of Waterville, Mansfield, Bridgeport, Brewster and environs.

The rarest wintering birds seen were a Gyrfalcon (gray morph) at Sim's Corner and two Eared Grebes spotted late in the day at Bridgeport Bar (Moe and Grange Roads). Snowy Owl, Common Redpoll, Lapland Longspur, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, and others are target species that will have to go on next year's wish list. Lower numbers of and lack of arctic species may also be related to the spring-like conditions found in Douglas County the first week in February.

The group watched with fascination while a tenacious Rough-legged Hawk chased off and displaced the Gyrfalcon three times in a row. The ubiquitous Rough-legged Hawks provided numerous opportunities to practice identifying light and dark morph birds.

Also remarkable was the discovery of four Great Horned Owls at one stop on Highway 172. In addition, the group found two Great Horned Owls at the Mansfield Cemetery for a total of six individuals for the day.

The field trip ended late in the day with two Trumpeter Swans flying side by side down the Columbia River providing great views as they flew alongside our car heading home.



Dan Stephens, Charlie Sheard and Dick Martin enjoy spring-like conditions on the Waterville Plateau

The 44 birds seen on this field trip are listed below. Last year's trip recorded 55 species. Trip species list compiled by Dan Stephens (Cashmere), trip leader, Connie McCauley and Susan Fishburn (Leavenworth), trip participants.

American Robin  
Bald Eagle (3)  
American Kestrel (1)  
European Starling  
Greater Scaup  
American Coot  
Common Raven  
Steller's Jay  
Black-billed Magpie  
Gray Partridge (10)  
Horned Lark  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Rock Pigeon  
Rough-legged Hawk (13)  
Snow Bunting (hundreds)  
Northern Shrike (2)  
Great Horned Owl (6)  
Eurasian Collared Dove  
House Finch  
Northern Flicker (1)  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Northern Pintail (hundreds)  
Mallard  
Canada Goose (3,000+)  
Golden Eagle (1)  
Cackling Goose (hundreds)  
Redhead  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Gyrfalcon  
Great Blue Heron  
Lesser Scaup  
Gadwall  
Bufflehead  
Common Loon  
White-crowned Sparrow  
Eared Grebe  
Horned Grebe  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Western Grebe  
Ring-billed Gull  
Common Goldeneye  
American Wigeon  
Ruddy Duck  
Trumpeter Swan (2)

# Notes from Bob's Journal

by Bob Spiwak

Mid morning. February is 1/3 gone. Up here in the Mazama neighborhood that we refer to West Boesel the sun has been shining for two days. Talking to friends on the Jersey shore and Dulles area Virginia I learn that the first big storm has passed and they are in the midst of a second, a whiteout blizzard.

North Central Washington, on the other hand has had a relatively salubrious winter. Where we normally have two to three feet of snow on the ground at this time, the snow pole measures a mere ten inches. Rain is predicted over the next seven days, temperatures ranging into the 40s and barely below freezing at night. Our pond, usually ice locked in winter months, has been open since early January. By now I would have expected a plethora of migrating birds, but such is not the case. At the feeders we have the usual quartet of Stellar Jays, a Downy and a Hairy Woodpecker, a Red-shafted Flicker and a onetime appearance Clark's Nutcracker in January. Black-capped and Mountain Chickadees are here as usual, but their numbers are down as are those of nuthatches.

I reckon this may be because there are more seeds and berries available with virtually no snow to cover or bend them into the drifts. Those mentioned above are the feeder visitors, and I have seen their ilk flitting around in the deep woodlands between here and the Methow River.

Our last "Big" snowfall was seven inches, then the sun came out followed by a couple of nights in the teens that

put a nice crust on the snow enabling walking around on it – no skis, no webs (snowshoes). It was ideal tracking snow, or would be had I gotten around a day earlier. If there were mouse tracks, the melt probably covered them for there were none. Lots of coyote tracks, probably some from a bobcat we identified by measuring the stride and size of the depressions left behind. Some deer, that number also down from the past.

The big find was a bear track, and not more than 20 feet in front of a part-timer neighbors' house. First coming upon them I thought they were human footprints, albeit wide, but then came across a couple that had the claw marks clearly visible. With my wife two days later, we revisited. It was overcast and bright making the tracks hard to discern and that, coupled with the daytime melting had obscured all but a trace of claw print of one hind foot. Measurements were taken as was the stride, about 15 inches. As black bears are not true hibernators, we're told, the warming weather has probably brought some out on the prowl. One wildlife employee reported seeing chipmunks afield already. Our squirrels have been busy below and on the feeders as well as vainly trying to climb to one atop the two inch steel pole liberally coated with Wesson oil.

*editor's note - an email with photos attached from Bob last night said the most recent visitor to leave tracks near his house is a cougar with very large feet.*

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## Local Birders Visit South Africa

Photos and article  
by Dot Roberts

In October of 2009 we traveled to South Africa and spent several weeks in and around Kruger National Park and The Cape area. In Kruger we saw some unusual and rare birds including the Saddle-billed Stork. According to information we received, there are only 100 of these storks remaining in the northern part of South Africa. Other species we enjoyed were the Southern Ground Hornbill and the Red-billed Hornbill, the Lilac-breasted Roller and European Roller, African Darters and many more, too numerous to name.



Common Ostrich



Southern Red-billed Hornbill

While in the Cape area, we stayed in a self-accommodation owned and operated by Patrick and Marie-Louise Cardwell. Patrick is an accredited field guide for South Africa birding and while there we were able to spend a day with him. On this single trip we saw 74 different birds and experienced a variety of areas from Kirstenbosch Gardens to out-of-the-way bird hides (blinds) and the seashore. We saw species of ibis, spoonbills, flamingos, crows and flycatchers, among others! On our own we were amused by ostrich chasing baboons, watching the Jackass Penguins and simply observing the many different birds of the area.

# March Offerings from the Native Plant Society

by Susan Ballinger

The middle week of March features two programs of the Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS) Wenatchee Chapter. Mark your calendar for the environmental documentary *A Sense of Wonder* on March 16, followed by a dynamic talk entitled Rare Plants of the Wenatchee Mountains - Issues of Rarity and Conservation on March 18.

*A Sense of Wonder* is an engaging new film about Rachel Carson. When pioneering environmentalist Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* in 1962, the backlash from her critics thrust her into the center of a political maelstrom. Despite her love of privacy, Carson's convictions and her foresight regarding the risks posed by chemical pesticides forced her into a very public and controversial role. In this documentary-style film, Kaiulani Lee embodies this extraordinary woman in the final year of her life.

The film, *A Sense of Wonder*, is the last in this season's Wenatchee Valley Environmental Film Series. It will be shown at the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center on Tuesday, March 16, at 7 p.m. A \$5 donation is suggested. The screening is sponsored by The WNPS Wenatchee Chapter; the film series is presented by WVMCC, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, and Trust for Public Land. For more information call the museum at 888-6240.

Did you know that the Wenatchee Mountains are home to many of our state's rarest wildflowers? To learn more, plan to attend the WNPS Wenatchee Chapter meeting on March 18, 7:00 PM at the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center. The speaker will be Wendy Gible, Program Manager for the Washington Rare Plant Care and Conservation Program at the University of Washington Botanic Gardens. Wendy will show striking close-up photographs of some of our region's rarest native plants to illustrate her talk about causes and types of rarity.

Some native plants are naturally rare with very specific climate or geology requirements. Other species have become rare due to habitat loss and degradation, problems from introduced and invasive species, or to excessive harvesting. Many native plants in Washington State are under increasing threat due to rapidly growing human population and development. To date, 320 plant species are described as sensitive, threatened, or endangered in our state. How will changing precipitation patterns and warming temperatures of climate change impact Washington's wild rare plants? Wendy will answer questions and then offer ways to take action and be participants in rare plant conservation.

Rare Care is the only plant conservation program that focuses exclusively on plants designated as rare in Washington State. In 2003, the program was nationally awarded "Conservation Project of the Year," for providing urgent rare plant conservation through methods that include monitoring, off-site conservation, reintroduction, and education. Rare Care uses a unique approach to utilize the energy and interests of volunteers to implement conservation. Program goals include collection, storage, and propagation of seeds of rare plants, reintroduction of rare plants to native habitat, and monitoring of rare plant populations in Washington. Learn more about Rare Care at <http://courses.washington.edu/rarecare/index.htm>

To learn more about the Wenatchee Chapter of the WNPS contact co-chairs Pam Camp (663-5491) or Susan Ballinger (664-8955). The Washington Native Plant Society is a forum for individuals who share a common interest in Washington's unique and diverse plant life. For more than 30 years WNPS has been a great source for native plant information and action.

## Chelan Douglas Land Trust Thinks Spring

by Sharon Lunz

Although the calendar says it is still winter, the temperatures do not seem to agree. So we are shifting into thinking about spring, and have planned an exciting variety of spring outings and events, including many on Land Trust properties. Join us in visiting one of the special places that your support has helped protect, and enjoy great company and enthusiastic trip leaders who love to share their knowledge. Field trips range from wildflower walks and birding trips to a nature photography outing for point and shoot camera owners. Visit our calendar of events on our website for details and a complete listing of all outings: [www.cdlandtrust.org/newsletter.html](http://www.cdlandtrust.org/newsletter.html).

We are very excited to announce that the Land Trust is taking the lead on organizing two new Earth Day events, including a Wenatchee Earth Day Festival in Centennial Park on April

17, and Earth Day at the Jacobson Preserve on April 18. Lisa Foster, our AmeriCorps intern, is spearheading these events, and has engaged many enthusiastic partners in the effort.

We have also set the date for our annual Spring Social on April 9th, the Horse Lake Trailhead Dedication on April 10th, and the Summer Picnic on July 14th. Details will be coming soon.

We also are starting to schedule our spring volunteer work parties. If you are interested in getting out and making a difference on the ground, check out our website, [www.cdlandtrust.org](http://www.cdlandtrust.org) for opportunities to help with mule deer and reptile surveys, riparian plantings, and weed pulls. We will have lots of trail building and trail maintenance work parties as well, which will be posted in the coming weeks.

**March 2010 Wild Phlox**

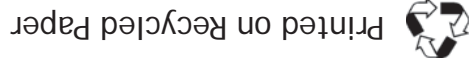
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**North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar**

March 11	Washington's Family Forests	NCW Audubon program, see page 1 for more info
March 12	Landscaping for Wildlife	Barn Beach Reserve, call 548-0181 for more info
March 16	<i>Sense of Wonder</i>	Film, see page 7 for more info
March 18	Rare Plants of the Wenatchee Mtns	Native Plant Society, see page 7
March 26 - 28	Sandhill Crane Festival	in Othello, see <a href="http://www.othelloandhillcranefestival.org/">www.othelloandhillcranefestival.org/</a>
April 17 - 18	Earth Day Celebration	see page 7 for more info
April 22 & 23	Paul Bannick The Owl & the Woodpecker	In Republic and Omak, see next month's Wild Phlox
May 13 - 16	Leavenworth Spring BirdFest	See next month's Wild Phlox
May 23	Bird the Okanogan	See next month's Wild Phlox
June 11 - 14	Ornithological Society	Meeting in Wenatchee, see last month's Wild Phlox!



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