



Volume 49 #9 June 2016

Audubon Council of Washington Coming to Wenatchee

by Audubon Washington

Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) happens every fall in a different location around the state. It is the annual conference of all Audubon Chapters in the state. ACOW is an opportunity to network, learn, share and have fun with like-minded individuals who care about birds and habitat. North Central Washington Audubon Society is excited to be hosting this event along with other eastern Washington Chapters and Audubon Washington. This year's theme is Management of Public Lands and how the Audubon Network can participate and take action.

Our main topic of conversation this year will be the management of public lands in Washington and how our Audubon network can best steward their health and protection for birds and people. In addition, David Ringer, National Audubon Society (NAS) Chief Network Officer, will be joining us at ACOW to introduce himself, his vision for network collaboration, and discuss how our efforts in Washington State fit into the larger context of Audubon's conservation agenda.

Come prepared for a weekend of activity in the Wenatchee Valley! The Audubon Washington state board will meet the afternoon of October 7. Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC) will meet October 7 in the evening, and we are working on an education workshop that may take place just before or concurrent to the WSACC meeting. A field trip on fire ecology is being planned for Sunday, October 9 in Chelan County.

The agenda and online registration will be posted to <http://wa.audubon.org/events/audubon-council-washington>. For more information, email jsyrowitz@audubon.org.



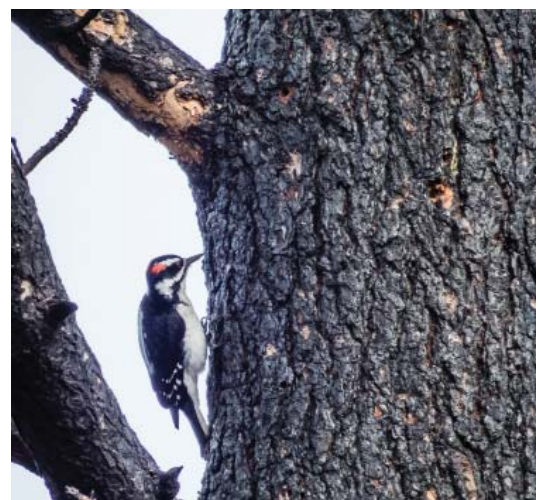
SAVE
THE DATE

Saturday,
October 8, 2016

Audubon Council
of Washington

Confluence Technology
Center, Wenatchee

Hosted by North Central
Washington Audubon and
Eastern Washington Chapters



A Hairy Woodpecker searches for bugs on a burned ponderosa pine tree
photo by Teri J Pieper

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."

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President - Art Campbell | 996-8168 | rapakivi@methow.com

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Secretary | Penny Tobiska | ptobiska@nwi.net

Conservation - Mark Johnston | 548-5766 | S697striata@frontier.com

Education and Outreach | Penny Tobiska | ptobiska@nwi.net

Mark Oswood | 662-9087 | moswood@nwi.net

Field Trips | Virginia Palumbo | 682-5969 | palumbov@nwi.net

Membership | Mark Oswood | 662-9087 | moswood@nwi.net

Newsletter | Teri J Pieper | 630-6224 | teripieper@hotmail.com

Science Officer | Don McIvor | 997-9456 | puma@methownet.com

Communications | Treesa Hertzell | webmaster@ncwaudubon.org

Festival Coordinator | Richard Scranton | rscran4350@yahoo.com

At Large: Heather Findlay | 429-8167 | heather@eaglesun.net

Allisa Carlson | 422-0855 | allisamae@gmail.com

Ruth Daugherty | 779-4380 | ruthdaugherty@rocketmail.com

Jenny Graevell | Facebook admin

Website - www.ncwaudubon.org

Mailing address - PO Box 2934 Wenatchee, WA 98807

North Central Washington Audubon Society is on Facebook too

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



A Common Raven surveys the scene,
probably looking for a meal for its family
photo by Teri J Pieper

North Central Washington Audubon Society Wild Phlox Subscription Form

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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.

Editor's Notes

Late spring means that our nests and nest boxes are all busy with birds building nests, laying eggs and feeding babies. The first robin fledglings are already on the ground and taking flight. Say's Phoebe babies peer down at me as I work in the garden while their mom softly whistles to them from the garden fence. She and I are hoping that they don't spill over the edge before they are ready to face the world. One box had Western Bluebirds in it until a few days ago when I saw sticks poking out of it. A House Wren had taken over. When I opened the box, I found that it had built its nest right on top of the bluebird eggs. This bothers me. I had hoped with the fire that we'd see fewer House Wrens as some people say there are increasing populations of the diminutive powerhouses because the shrub layer had gotten so tall and thick – less friendly for bluebirds. However, on our place, the loss of the shrubs has not caused a decrease in the House Wren population. Darn. Another nest box had a Douglas squirrel move in. This box was located near the house and directly over the garden and I was very unhappy about sharing space with a squirrel. So we set about to relocate the box. First Ken taped the opening shut with duct tape, after he was sure she was still in there. The squirrel immediately started to chew her way out. It sounded like she had a saw in her mouth. I held a rock over the opening as I carried it to the new site – a place away from the house with a few live pine trees where she might find cones and seeds. It was carefully hung on a tree and we backed away and watched her chew her way out (quickly!) and then she took a good look around before settling back into her chosen box. Whew. Last time I checked she was still there, presumably raising youngsters. We have two kestrel boxes, both mounted fairly high so we cannot look into them. We have not seen kestrels using them though. I figured I could reach one of the boxes with a well-aimed rock so I tried a few times til I hit it and what should pop out and glare at me? A flying squirrel! This was quite remarkable. I had never seen one before. Ever! And our place does not in any way, shape or form, resemble flying squirrel habitat! I am happy to have her and hope she too is raising babies. Sadly, our other kestrel box has starlings in it. This box is completely unreachable. We hired a man to climb the tree and mount the box well out of reach. We are open to suggestions for deterring starlings in the future.

This is the last Wild Phlox til September. NCWAS takes the summer off to enjoy birds and their habitats with our friends and families. Watch our website and Facebook page for news from your chapter until then.



A Tree Swallow perched on top of its chosen nest box.
photo by Teri J Pieper



A female Tree Swallow peeks out from a nest box.
photo by Teri J Pieper

NCW Recent Bird Sightings

compiled from the ncwabird email list
and Tweepers by Teri J Pieper

A possible Broad-tailed Hummingbird was reported in Republic. If accepted by the Washington Bird Records committee, this would be only the second sighting of this wandering hummer in our state. White-throated Swifts returned to Pipestone Canyon near Winthrop. A pair of Black-backed Woodpeckers was seen above First Creek (above Lake Chelan State Park) and also the Upper Basin Birders saw a single female near Fish Creek. Someone saw and photographed a very late Snowy Owl on Echo Ridge, near Lake Chelan. Upper Basin Birders have observed a Sora, sixty American Pipits, a Lewis' Woodpecker, Common Yellowthroats and winnowing Wilson's Snipe at Fish Lake. They saw their FOY Black-headed Grosbeak along the White River. A Virginia Rail was reported above the West Foster Creek wetlands in Douglas County. Early in May we saw our FOY Sora, Lewis' Woodpecker, Dusky, Hammond's and Pacific Slope Flycatchers, Warbling Vireo, Lazuli Bunting, Yellow-headed Blackbird and some very pretty Green-winged Teal on a route to Conconully. A Western Tanager was reported in Mazama on May 17.

Birding by Ear Field Trip

by Virginia Palumbo, Chelan

Join Mark Johnston and Virginia Palumbo on a First Creek birding adventure June 4. The First Creek valley above the Lake Chelan State Park, is home to many exciting early summer birds – Black-backed Woodpeckers have been seen this year, along with White-headed, Pileated and other woodpeckers. We might see five or six thrush species, various flycatchers, American Dippers, warblers, Western Tanagers, swifts, vireos, grosbeaks, hummers and raptors. The walk will take us through riparian areas along the creek and by a beaver pond, and then head into mixed ponderosa

pine forests. This outing will cover three to four miles on foot along a dirt road and wooded paths with some mild elevation gain, although most of the gain up to 3000 feet will be by car.

We will gather at Virginia's house in Chelan at 7 am to carpool, and arrive at First Creek by 7:30. Please contact Virginia for details and RSVP at 682-5969 or palumbov@nwi.net. Limited to six people. Dress in layers for cool temperatures early and warmer later. Bring water and snacks, sunscreen, and insect repellent (if desired).

Citizen Science Walks Continue All Summer at Wenatchee and Beebe Springs

by Virginia Palumbo, Chelan

Twice-monthly Citizen Science bird walks continue all summer on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at Walla Walla Point Park and the Horan Natural Area in Wenatchee. These are led by Susan Ballinger. Scheduled dates for June are the 8th and 22nd. Please contact Susan at skylinebal@gmail.com for further information and to sign-up. This data is collected for the Chelan Douglas Land Trust.

On the first and third Wednesday of each month, Virginia Palumbo leads a Citizen Science bird walk at Beebe Springs, near Chelan Falls. Scheduled June dates are the 1st and 15th. Contact Virginia at palumbov@nwi.net for the start time and to sign-up. The data collected is shared with Ron Fox, Wildlife Biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

NCW Audubon Bird Routes are Mobile Friendly

by Art Campbell, Winthrop

Our website that describes birdwatching routes in our chapter's four-county region is now available for use on your mobile device!

Access the mobile version from your smartphone or other mobile device in the same way that you access the regular version on your computer. To start, bring up the main chapter webpage – www.ncwaudubon.org – on your smart phone or tablet. On the menu located along the left side of the main page, select birding, which brings up our chapter's main birding page. At the top of the birding page, select Our Online Interactive Birding Routes Guide. The website recognizes that the selection is coming from a mobile device and brings up the top page of the mobile version of the guide. You'll probably want to bookmark that top page on your mobile device for easy future access.

To access an individual route description from the top page, expand the four-county map and touch the icon for the route you want to access (it helps to hold your finger down on the icon for a split-second rather than just tapping the icon). You'll now be shown the page for the route you selected.

Let us know how the mobile version works for you. We always appreciate your feedback.

Other birding resources you will find on the NCW Audubon website include bird lists of the Wenatchee River Watershed, the Confluence park, and the Methow Valley Watershed. There is also a bird map of the Wenatchee River Watershed. We also have a bird sightings list-serv at NCWABird@yahoo.com. For more information on the list-serv, please contact Art at rapakivi@methow.com.

Native Plants in a Firewise Landscape

from Kittitas Audubon

Kittitas Audubon recently published two new best practices guides as part of the chapter's comprehensive climate work. Many of these ideas will be applicable in North Central Washington also. These documents can be found as PDF's online.

They are *Using Native Plants to Preserve Birds and Protect Homes Under a Changing Climate* - http://wa.audubon.org/sites/g/files/amh546/f/static_pages/attachments/native_plants-bird_tips_and_bps_complete_

[guide.pdf](http://wa.audubon.org/sites/g/files/amh546/f/static_pages/attachments/native_plants_in_fire-prone_areas_of_eastern_washington.pdf) and *Using Native Plants in Fire-prone Areas of Eastern Washington* - http://wa.audubon.org/sites/g/files/amh546/f/static_pages/attachments/native_plants_in_fire-prone_areas_of_eastern_washington.pdf

You can also find these links on our website.

Kittitas Audubon is considering ways the techniques and tools presented in their guide might be implemented in their local communities and region. You can reach out to Judy Hallisey (hydrojude@gmail.com) for more info.

Summer Events in the Okanogan Highlands:

A Walk Through Time and Searching for Dragons and Damsels

by Julie Ashmore,
Okanogan Highlands

On June 26, Okanogan Highlands Alliance offers community members a chance to take a guided hike with Dana Visalli, along a hidden canyon connecting the Burge Mountain road and the Highlands Nordic Sno-Park near Havillah.

Life has been on an immense journey through time, and it turns out that much of the evidence for that journey is all around us in the natural world. On this day hike we will look for the evidence that the plants, animals and even the rocks have changed over time, creating ever more complex ecological relationships and ever richer ecosystems. This walk will offer a condensed version of a five-day program on this subject that Dana taught last summer in the Methow Valley.

“I was asked for a quote that would characterize the Highland Wonders Ecology and Evolution hike,” Dana says. “One of the most appropriate that I can think of is by an obscure poet named Bill Shakespeare, who noted, after years of observing the natural world, ‘In nature’s infinite book of secrecy, a little I can read.’ On this walk we will be reading some of nature’s secrets.”

This hike is rated moderately strenuous, traveling mainly but not always on trails, with sections of uneven terrain and forest debris on the ground. The hike will be roughly four miles long. Community members should consider their physical condition and whether a hike of this nature would be suitable for their needs, strengths, and stamina.

Please note that cell phone reception is unlikely on this hike. Restrooms will be available at the start and end of the hike. This event is not able to accommodate dogs, unless they are service dogs. Proper hiking footwear is essential.

Earlier this spring, Dennis Paulson, one of the most knowledgeable naturalists in the Northwest, provided a profusely illustrated lecture as part of the indoor Highland Wonders series. This summer, he will share his interest in the biodiversity and biology of dragonflies and damselflies by taking a group outdoors. The numerous lakes in the north Okanogan have diverse dragonfly and damselfly faunas.

On July 23, Dennis will provide a hands-on field experience focused on the lives of dragonflies and damselflies in our region. We will take a group into the field to visit several lakes in areas such as Molson and Mt Hull, beginning and ending the day in Tonasket, visiting a variety of habitats used by dragonflies for breeding, feeding, and

completing their life cycle. We will see how many species we can identify, and watch for interesting territorial and reproductive behaviors that these species display. We will carry a few nets to capture individuals to show them in the hand, as a close-up look is a great way to augment seeing them in the field. We will also try to scoop some larvae/nymphs from the water to view the other part of their life cycle.

Dragonflies and damselflies are often called birdwatchers’ insects. Active and brilliantly colored, these four-winged predators fly everywhere over unspoiled wetlands. Their very different-looking larvae are dominant predators in the water below. They have the best vision and the most versatile flight of any insects, and their sex life is similarly superlative.

Dennis would say there are no insects more interesting than dragonflies and damselflies. They are common, but because of their association with wetlands, many people go through life with little contact with these wonders of nature. Any well-rounded naturalist should have that contact, and this is such an opportunity. We have to preserve our natural ecosystems, as much for ourselves as for the animals and plants with which we share the world. Understanding those systems and their animals and plants are essential to their conservation. Thus natural history is our most important science.

Due to the nature of these outdoor events, participation is limited, and priority registration is being offered for OHA members. A waiting list is being generated on a first-come, first-serve basis. To begin or renew OHA membership and be first in line to register for the summertime events, community members can donate at okanoganhighlands.org, or contact OHA for more information. Further details will be provided to those who register for the field trip. To sign up for this event, please email julie@okanoganhighlands.org or call 476-2432. There is no charge for this event; donations are always welcome.

OHA is a non-profit organization that works to educate the public on watershed issues. The Highland Wonders educational series features the natural history of the Okanogan Highlands and surrounding areas. OHA’s Education Program, which is offered free of charge, is designed to build the capacity of the community to steward natural habitats and resources by helping increase awareness of local natural history. Details are provided on OHA’s website: www.okanoganhighlands.org/education/hw.

Invaders in our Foothills: Help Stop the Weeds!

By Susan Ballinger, CDLT 2016 Conservation Fellow

Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) has teamed up with Chelan County Weed Board to offer free workshops for the community on Tuesday, June 7 from 6-8 pm, with an optional field session on Wednesday, June 15 from 6-8 pm. Mark your calendar and plan to attend workshops to learn how to identify the thirteen most noxious weeds that threaten our native plant communities after wildfire. CDLT Stewardship Director, Neal Hedges has discovered a number of new weed species in the Wenatchee foothills, likely transported to our area on fire fighting vehicles and equipment in 2012 and 2015. Neal's goal is to enlist trail users to provide a first alert for these invaders so action can be taken to keep the weeds from spreading. Weed

Board Field Supervisor and Botanist Julie Sanderson will teach field identification tips for a list of the thirteen "most wanted" invasive species. Participants will be provided with pocket guides and a way to share the location with CDLT by recording their location, either on a map or with a GPS.

The June 7 workshop will be held at Chelan County PUD Auditorium, 327 North Wenatchee Avenue from 6-8 pm. The location for the optional June 15 field session will be announced at the June 7 workshop. Workshops are free and open to the public. Contact CDLT at 667-9708 or susan@cdlandtrust.org for more information or to register.

Guided Walks in the Wenatchee Foothills

By Susan Ballinger, CDLT 2016 Conservation Fellow

Are you one of the many valley residents who haven't yet had the chance to explore the Wenatchee Foothills? Maybe you've heard of places like Saddle Rock, Castle Rock, or the Jacobson Preserve, but wonder about where to park, what gear to bring, and how much time it might take. This spring Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) is offering a ten-week "Walk-and-Talk" outing series especially designed to introduce the trail system to a broad cross-section of our community. These one-hour, mostly Thursday evening short walks will be led by local volunteers who are eager to share their passion with new and experienced trail users. Visit the CDLT website to view a trailhead map www.cdlandtrust.org/what-we-do/land-conservation/wenatchee-foothills/directions-trailheads. RSVP appreciated. www.cdlandtrust.org/whats-new or call 667-9708

June 1, Wildflower Wednesday Walk, 9-10 am at Balsamroot Trailhead, Wenatchee Foothills
June 2, Thursday Walk-and-Talk, 6-7 pm at Castle Rock Trailhead. Wenatchee Valley's Ice Age floods story, lead by geologist Brent Cunderla
June 8, Wildflower Wednesday Walk, noon-1 pm, Saddle Rock Trailhead, Wenatchee Foothills
June 15, Wildflower Wednesday Walk
June 16, Thursday Walk-and-Talk 6-7 pm at Jacobson Preserve Trailhead. Home landscaping tips, inspired by the Foothills with Landscaper Susan Cusick

An Attentive Rambling in the Natural World

by the Wenatchee River Institute

The Wenatchee River institute is hosting a nature hike with Libby Mills on June 25 at 8:00 am.

Moving slowly and quietly in the company of esteemed naturalist Libby Mills, you will open our eyes and ears to examine the natural world of birds, wildflowers and key natural history questions that arise on an old-fashioned nature walk. Seek out nesting birds, record your musings and discoveries, take some photographs, and seek out relationships between plants and animals. Explore the world slowly and leave with a deep sense of engagement in nature! The walk may be as long as four miles with moderate activity.

Libby Mills has worked as an artist, field naturalist and instructor since the 1970's engaging beginners and experienced folks who love paying attention to the wild that surrounds us. She has taught at the North Cascades Institute, the Padilla Bay Foundation and is on the board of the Skagit Audubon Society.

The cost is \$35 for members and \$42 for nonmembers. To register, call 548-0181 or email info@wenatcheeriverinstitute.org.



Calliope Hummingbird
photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

Invasive Weed Education in the Methow Valley

by Mary Kiesau, Winthrop

Most of the Methow Valley's invasive weeds are up and some are blooming - cheatgrass, whitetop, knapweed, bulbous bluegrass, salsify, tumble mustard and much more. Now is a great time to look around your property, especially if it burned in previous summers, for non-native plants and get an early start on controlling weeds.

The Methow Conservancy's online "Invasive Weed Guide" at <http://methowconservancy.org/weeds.html> can help you identify local weeds and learn what to do about them. Click on a weed "card" to get details, photos and videos. Our newest card is Puncturevine! Stay tuned for more cards soon.

You can also talk to us in person at our annual Weed & Native Plant Education Booth at the Methow Valley Farmers Market in Twisp from 9 am to Noon on Saturday May 28th. We showcase live common weeds as well as many good native plants; share what advice we can; and give away take-home resources like our Restoring Shrub-Steppe in the Methow Valley handbook (which we are also happy to mail to you).

Another way to learn which weeds are which and what to do about them is to join us on a free Weed Education Walk! We have walks scheduled on May 27 and June 6. See below for the list of all of our walks, and how to sign up.

Wildflower Rambles and Birding Strolls

by Mary Kiesau, Winthrop

Join Mary Kiesau, the Methow Conservancy's Educational Programs Director, on one (or more) casual natural history "walk and talks" to identify and learn about the many Methow birds, wild plants and invasive weeds on these short outings. These walks and hikes are perfect for people of all ages and levels of knowledge - no experience required! Children who are able

to walk on uneven ground for two+ hours are welcome to attend with an adult chaperone. We'll go to a different location on each walk, and can accommodate children if you register in advance. No dogs please. These mini-classes are free but space is limited so registration is required. Contact us for more details or to reserve your spot at mary@methowconservancy.org or 996-2870.

Friday, May 27, 2:30 - 4:00 pm, Invasive Weed Stroll
Wednesday, June 1, 7:00 - 8:30 am Bird Walk
Monday, June 6, 9:30 - 11:00 am Invasive Weed Stroll
Thursday, June 9, 7:00 - 8:30 am Bird Walk
Tuesday, June 14, 7:00 - 8:30 am Bird Walk
Monday, June 20, 7:00 am - Noon Summer Solstice Birds & Blooms Hike
(if there are more requests for invasive weed walks, we may add more)

Methow Headwaters Community Hike

from the Methow Valley Citizens' Council

The Methow Valley Citizens' Council (MVCC) has a distinguished history of fighting for progressive land use and environmental values in the Methow Valley since 1976. The Mission of the Methow Valley Citizens Council is to raise a strong community voice for protection of the Methow Valley's natural environment and rural character. MVCC pursues its work by monitoring planning activities at the county and local level; tracking development proposals; writing letters to the editor and elected officials; organizing educational events; working on litigation and seeking proactive and creative ways to preserve this place. MVCC is committed to working with members and partners who bring diverse perspectives—geographical, cultural, professional, and socio-economic—on conservation issues in the Methow Valley and Okanogan County. We actively seek to collaborate with regional and statewide groups and increasingly are finding opportunities to lend a credible voice from Eastern Washington on issues of statewide significance.

On Saturday, May 28 botanist George Wooten and outreach coordinator Hannah Dewey will lead a Methow Headwaters Community Hike from 9 am – 1 pm. This is a three-mile hike of the proposed Flag

Mountain copper mine site on US Forest Service lands including some Northern Spotted Owl habitat. Learn about the ecological diversity of this area and why the headwaters should be protected from industrial-scale mining activities. This hike is free and open to the public. For more information call 997-0888 or email mvcc@mvcitizens.org



Great Blue Heron family
photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

June Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar
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May 27 - June 20	Rambles and Strolls in the Methow	Learn with the Methow Conservancy. See page 7
May 28	Methow Headwaters Hike	Learn about the Watershed. See page 7
June 1	Douglas Creek and Badger Mtn	NCWAS Field trip. See last month's Phlox or our website
June 1 - 16	Walk the Wenatchee Foothills	Learn with CDLT. See page 6
June 1 and 15	Bird Walks at Beebe Springs	Citizen Science at Work! See page 4
June 4	Birding by Ear with NCWAS	With Mark and Virginia! See page 4
June 7 and 15	Weed Workshop	Learn about the invaders! See page 6
June 8 and 22	Bird Walks at Horan	Citizen Science at Work! See page 4
June 25	An Attentive Ramble	With Wenatchee River Institute. See page 6
June 26 and July 23	Highland Wonders Adventures	Hike through time and chase dragonflies! See page 5
September 17	Hawk Migration Festival	Watch our website for updates
October 8	Audubon Council of WA	In Wenatchee. See page 1



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