

### June 1 Four-County Bird Count

Each spring, from as far away as South America, millions of birds migrate into North Central Washington. The new arrivals, together with the plucky resident birds that have endured our cold and snowy winter, start their breeding activities – courting, building nests, laying eggs, and raising young. For many birdwatchers, the highlight of each year is anticipating and then observing this annual pageant.

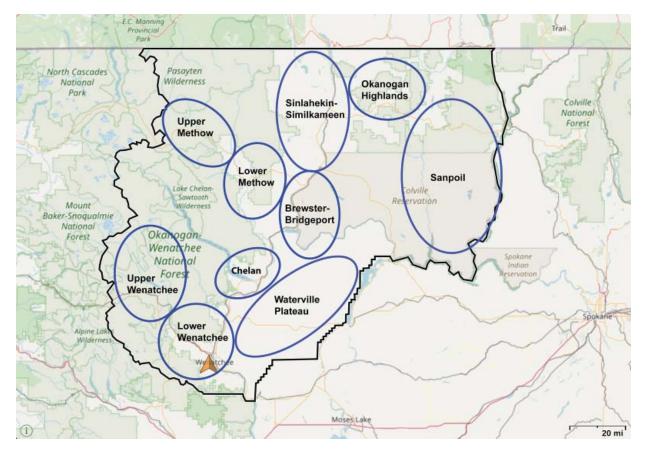
To celebrate this spectacle, on June 1, NCWAS will hold a bird count covering the four counties covered by our chapter – Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, and Okanogan. Our goal is to collect important data on birdlife in our region while having an exciting and fun day of birding. We intend to make the four-county count an annual event, and the data we collect this year and in future years will help us understand trends in bird numbers

by Art Campbell, Winthrop

and distribution. If you're a birdwatcher, we welcome your participation. A birding novice? Don't worry! We can team you up with one of our local experts.

On June 1, teams of birdwatchers will go into the field, each team counting species and individuals within a specific area for a full day of birding. The map below shows areas within our region that contain especially important bird habitat, and we intend to concentrate our count teams in those locations. Each area will have a lead person to organize counting activities.

If you watch birds, and want to participate, e-mail Art Campbell at rapakivi@methow.com. We look forward to your involvement. Let's have a good time on June 1 and get our fourcounty count off to a great start!



The mission of the North Central Washington Audubon Society is to: "Enhance, protect and restore healthy natural ecosystems and native biodiversity using science, advocacy, education and on-theground conservation to promote the welfare of birds in North Central Washington"

#### North Central Washington Audubon Society

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#### NCW Audubon Social in Twisp

by Julie Hovis, Winthrop

Please remember to join us on Thursday May 23 for the NCWAS social in the Methow Valley. The event will be at the Methow Valley Interpretive Center on the TwispWorks Campus, 210 Fifth Avenue in Twisp from 7:00 - 8:30 pm. This is an excellent opportunity to meet your board members, catch up on the Chapter's activities, enjoy some refreshments, and participate in a fun and challenging "What's That Bird?" photo quiz. Members and non-members, beginner and expert birders, young and old, and anyone interested in birds are invited to attend. We hope to see you there! Come a few minutes early and enjoy a stroll around the Methow Valley Native Plant Garden.



male Dusky Grouse photo by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley

North Central Washington Audubon Society Wild Phlox Subscription Form			
<ul> <li>Subscribe to NCW Audubon Wild Phlox One Year, Nine Issues - \$15 Suggested donation</li> <li>I prefer to get the Wild Phlox electronically (email address required below)</li> <li>Separate subscription to Phlox NOT needed for NAS members in good standing</li> <li>Donation: I would like to support NCW Audubon's programs of education and conservation. Enclosed is my additional donation of \$</li> </ul>			
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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			

### Editor's Notes

the Brewer's Sparrow's buzzy trill. Vesper Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks and Northern Flickers were maybe the loudest and most numerous today. We have had a few hummingbirds visit the feeders but not in any great numbers yet. They are Rufous and Calliope. Since 2014's fire, our hummingbird numbers have declined and last year it was shocking how little sugar water we put out for them. I hope they bounce back soon. Great Horned Owls are nesting not far from our house and I am looking forward to watching little ones grow up and learn to hunt. We have plenty of small mammals to keep them fed!

Are you one of our members from Ferry County? Did you know there is a birding group for NE Washington? It covers Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille Counties. They are planning to participate in the Global Big Day on May 4. You can find information about this group at https://newabirders.blogspot.com/ and they have a Facebook group.

Two people reported seeing male Dusky Grouse 'fights' within the last month. One fight occurred by the groomed ski trails near Sun Mountain Lodge. Ed reported that the birds post-holed in the deep snow and at one point the dominant bird pinned the other into the snow. Feathers and wings flew everywhere and finally the loser fled. In the other fight, my neighbors reported that one bird broke the other bird's wing. I've never seen such behavior. Have you?

Many people are still reporting a lack of small forest birds around the upper Methow watershed. Few chickdees, crossbills and nuthatches came to feeders this winter.

Birdsong filled the air on my morning dog walk today. A new, first of the year, song was

Remember the nesting Bald Eagles at the Horan Natural Area at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia Rivers? They were featured in the February issue of The Wild Phlox. Our board member and writer and photographer, Bruce McCammon shared some recent video of the nest showing one downy eaglet! I grew up in Wenatchee and there were never any eagles. Or Ospreys or Turkey Vultures for that matter. And now, they are nesting there! The recovery of the Bald Eagle and other raptors is truly an amazing story. Many thanks to the Endangered Species Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Remember to remind your congressmembers of the importance of these laws and share the evidence of the successes that we have observed in our lifetimes.

Whether you are a beginning birder or a person with a great ear and a long life list or someone in between, there are plenty of opportunities to learn about birds and birding this spring. So read, the Phlox, follow the website or Facebook page and get out there see some birds in the diverse and wonderful habitats of NCW and beyond.



Pileated Woodpecker photo by Richard Murray, Twisp

### NCW Recent Bird Sightings

Chelan County: Williamson's Sapsuckers were seen at Camas Meadows. A Wild Turkey flew across the highway at the summit of Blewett Pass. A Northern Saw-whet Owl was tooting near Leavenworth. A Tundra Swan was seen on the Malaga Pond. A Brewer's Sparrow was reported at Riverfront Park in Wenatchee. A flock of White-throated Swifts was seen in Chelan. A Northern Goshawk was seen at Fish Lake. A Pacific Loon, a Red-necked Grebe and a Red-breasted Merganser were seen from the Wells Dam Rest Area. A Lesser Goldfinch was at a feeder in Wenatchee. Vaux's Swifts were seen from the Icicle Ridge Trail.

Douglas County: A Ferruginous Hawk and a Pacific Wren were seen near The Nature Conservancy research station. A Savannah Sparrow was reported at Bridgeport Bar. A Peregrine Falcon and a late Snowy Owl was reported near Atkins Lake. Lapland Longspurs and Greater Yellowlegs were located east of Mansfield. Cliff Swallows and a Cinnamon Teal were seen at East Foster Creek. Trumpeter Swans were seen in a flooded field along highway 2. A compiled from the ncwabird email list and eBird and Tweeters by Teri J Pieper

Sagebrush Sparrow was seen near Waterville. A Sage Thrasher was seen near Leahy Junction.

Ferry County: Wood Ducks were seen along Napoleon Road. A Red-naped Sapsucker and a Yellow-rumped Warbler were reported on Mikalson Road.

Okanogan County: Vesper Sparrows arrived in late March. Wood Ducks arrived at the Twisp Ponds before the ice melted. They were also seen at the Winthrop Sewage Treatment ponds along with Ring-necked Ducks, Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes, Canvasbacks and Buffleheads. Sandhill Cranes were seen along Cameron Lake Road. Golden Eagles are nesting in the Okanogan Highlands. The Havillah area had White-throated Swifts, Williamson's Sapsuckers and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. A Barn Owl was heard at Bridgeport State Park. Shaw Lake (other wise known as Buck or Frost Lake) near Twisp, had a big fish die-off over winter, probably due to low oxygen levels, and it attracted numerous Bald Eagles. A Long-tailed Duck was reported in a pond along Cameron Lake Road. A Loggerhead Shrike was reported at Soap Lake.

### National Award-Winning Photographs on Display at Bird Fest

NCWAS will host the roadshow of the National Audubon Society's 2018 Photography Awards -alongside the award-winning photos from our own chapter's 2019 Bird Photo Contest.

We'll be at the Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest, Saturday and Sunday, 19-20 May, 10- 4 both days. Find us in the Sun Room of the River Haus, Bird Fest Central. We'll have 19 large photos on display, twelve from NAS plus seven from NCWAS, all captured moments worthy of your seeing.

The winning NAS photographers and their stunning bird photographs were selected from more than 8,000 entries submitted by photographers from all fifty states, Washington, D.C., and ten Canadian provinces. The NCWAS photographs were selected from 102 photos submitted by forty photographers.

In addition to the photo exhibit, we'll have a stock of the summer 2018 issue of Audubon magazine (featuring the award-winning photos you'll see at the exhibit), free for the taking, as supplies last. We'll also have our ever-popular Common Birds of NCW poster available (and other informational handouts),

posters on display, as well as a table of children's touchables and coloring pages. There will also be a mini-exhibit on Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge,

### 2019 NCWAS Photo Contest

The 2019 NCW Audubon bird photo contest drew some spectacular images of birds we see in our area. The winning photos can be viewed on our website (www.ncwaudubon.org). Learning from last year, we also put up a gallery of images to show all the images that were submitted. This is a chance to see your images if you entered and to make your own judgement about which images really stand out.

Thirty-two photographers entered 84 photos in the Adult category. Eight photographers entered 18 photos in the Youth category. The total number of images submitted in the Adult category is fewer than we saw in 2018 but the photographers came from a wider range of cities. The Adult photographs came from people living in thirteen cities: Cashmere, Chelan, East Wenatchee, Kettle Falls, Leavenworth, Malaga, Manson, Oroville, Peshastin, Republic, Waterville, Wenatchee,

and Winthrop. Youth photos originated in Chelan, East Wenatchee, Tonasket, Waterville and Wenatchee.

Our three judges completed their tasks in record time. We greatly appreciate their efforts to look closely at the images. A few of the comments that the judges attached to their ratings are:

• "Fantastic, though maybe a little over cropped"

by Mark Oswood, Wenatchee



NAS grand prize photograph Great Gray Owl photo by Steve Mattheis

by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

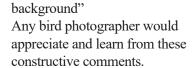
- "A little soft in the bird's eye, otherwise, perfect"
- "The decisive moment captured in great light of a truly special bird! And a nice and clean composition to boot!"
- "Very nice, well done. The bright background tree trunk on the right distracts my eye"
- "Excellent subject, pose and patterns!"

Grand prize winner

Calliope Hummingbird

photo by Tim Nicol, Republic

• "Caught a good moment but blends in too much with the



The winning photos will be printed and displayed at the Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest. Our regional winners will be presented with the traveling exhibit of the 2018 National Audubon Society photo contest. This combined display was a hit

last year. We took the opportunity to ask people which of prints, both National and Regional, they would

hang on their wall. This simple question gave people a sense of the challenge that photo judges face and often resulted in closer inspection of all the prints.

Our congratulations to all the winners this year. We greatly appreciate all the entries and hope that you will be able to enter again next year.

# with some things to take and some things to do.

North Central Washington Audubon Society 4

### June Field Trips Around Leavenworth and Twisp

by Mark Johnston, Leavenworth

Mark Johnston will lead two field trips during June in search of breeding birds in local habitats.

The first is **June 8**, **near Leavenworth**. Meet at 6:30 am at the park and ride lot just west of the Forest Service Ranger Station in Leavenworth. We'll spend the morning birding a diverse mix of habitats near town that are likely to produce a nice representation of species breeding in the area. Return by 1 pm.

On **June 15**, join Mark to bird in the **Methow Valley**. Meet at 6:30 am in the lot behind Hank's Grocery in Twisp. We'll visit a few sites in the general vicinity of Twisp that offer a diversity of habitats and wonderful birding. Though there is still extensive evidence of recent year's fires, productive unburned areas remain that host a wide range of bird species. Drivers will need a Discover Pass, so please bring one if you have it. Return by 2 pm.

Both trips are limited to ten or eleven participants. Contact Mark at s697striata@frontier.com or 548-5766 or 253-297-0705 to reserve your spot. Please dress for the weather and bring lunch, snacks, liquids, etc. There will be short walks on uneven ground.

### **Bird Fest Activities**

by Tricia Cook, Leavenworth You still have time to sign up for field trips and other events at Leavenworth's Spring Bird Fest, May 16-19. As of now, there were seats remaining for the keynote speaker, Robert Crossley, Birding by Raft and Birds of the West – mini art class with Molly Hashimoto, among other things.

Additionally, the juried art show, "Pacific Northwest Birds and their Habitats", highlighting works from North Central Washington artists as a collaboration with Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest will be on display all of May. The show is at Snowy Owl Theater at Icicle Creek Center for the Arts, 7409 Icicle Road, Leavenworth, WA 98826 https://icicle.org/art-exhibition/.



Burrowing Owl photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

#### Getting to Know Your Board Members – Penny Tobiska by Penny Tobiska, Wenatchee

**Tell us a little about your background and how you came to be interested in the natural world and birds.** During the early years, my family lived in the Shoreline area, and although they were not instrumental in introducing me to the outdoors, I was drawn out by friends and our beautiful Northwest surroundings. At the end of our street was a wonderful forest where we all played and explored. To paraphrase A.A. Milne, we were busy doing nothing and so we were doing something......

and Cultural Center, NCW Audubon, and the Wenatchee Row and Paddle Club. Last year, together, we introduced 2,000 plus students to the wonders of nature at the Confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia Rivers. My other interests are singing in Columbia Chorale, attending live musical concerts, gardening, travel near and far, walking Toby, our Jack Russel terrier, community volunteer work, cooking, and reading both fiction and non-fiction. By the way, one of the best books I

finding frogs, building walls, chucking sword ferns. As a teenager, I started skiing at Snoqualmie and Stevens Pass areas in the 1960s and loved being outside in the winter when most of Seattle was indoors. Later, friends introduced me to hiking and backpacking.

#### What are some of your other interests?

My husband, Larry and I have lived in North Central Washington for forty years where our recreational lives have revolved around outdoor activities including canoeing, boating, hiking, and x-c skiing. We introduced our children to these activities and are firm believers in the saying "No child left Inside." Therefore, we are dedicated to the "Youth on Columbia" program which is a partnership between the Wenatchee Valley Museum



Penny and Larry Tobiska photo provided

have read in the last two years is *The Soul* of *America* by Jon Meacham. I highly recommend it. But my favorite times of all are with our granddaughter Eleanor and her parents.

#### What is one special birding memory you could share? One standout experience was a November boating trip on the Intra Coastal Waterway down the coast of Georgia and Florida. Many of our northern birds settle in these relatively calm waters during the winter; some of the birds we observed were countless pelicans, egrets, Sandhill Cranes, Osprey, and several types of herons and terns. We also visited Wakodahatchee Wetland in Palm Beach County where visitors can see a remarkable concentration of water birds

up close and personal.

### New Wenatchee Area Field Guide

Curious Wenatchee area residents and visitors can use a newly published brochure to guide identification of locally common native plants and animals. The Wenatchee Area Field Guide is lightweight, waterproof, and costs \$8.95. Users are introduced to over 100 native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, insects, birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Color illustrations accompany descriptive texts, helping the observer to quickly identify species. This folding pocket naturalist guide is available for purchase at the Greater Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce, Pybus Market, and at the downtown Wenatchee Arlberg Sports.

The publication is a partnership project between Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT), the Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the Wenatchee Naturalist program. Wenatchee Naturalist program lead, Susan Ballinger, researched and selected the species and wrote the descriptive texts. CDLT coordinated the Waterford Press publication and the Chamber is administering sales. All proceeds will be returned to a CDLT dedicated account to fund a future second printing. All partners desire to showcase the diversity of life in our region and to build broad support for protecting the habitats where native plants and animals live. This publication was inspired by a similar one developed for the Methow Valley by the Methow Conservancy and Mary Kiesau, former outreach coordinator with the Conservancy, mentored Susan throughout the process.

With the coming of spring wildflowers and the return of migrating birds, now is the perfect time to purchase a copy. It makes an excellent gift for people of all ages and easily fits in a pocket.

### Sleeping Lady Bird Walks

May 4, May 18, June 1 and June 15

Breeding season Bird Walks at Leavenworth's Sleeping Lady Resort are an excellent opportunity to observe an abundance of species. We will tour Sleeping Lady's diverse habitats, beginning in the organic garden, to watch flower-pollinating-birds such as the Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds. We will search the aspen stands for "sock-nests" of Bullock's Orioles. We may see White-headed Woodpeckers, year-round residents, unique to the ponderosa pine forests.

These walks are co-led by wildlife biologist and artist Heather A. Wallis Murphy and bird-spotter Patrick Murphy from 8:00 to 9:30 am beginning at the Sleeping Lady Organic Garden, 7375 Icicle Road, Leavenworth WA 98826. Please note: The May 18 Bird Walk during Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest is from 8:00 to 10:00 am and will be on Icicle Creek Center for the Arts and Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery lands. The walks are free to the public. For more info see www.sleepinglady.com/event-calendar.php

And birders, here's some sweet news. Any time you purchase, dine or stay at Sleeping Lady Mountain Resort, part of the proceeds go back to conservation, arts and history in North Central Washington: Effective January 1, 2019, Harriet Bullitt transferred her ownership of the Sleeping Lady business to the Icicle Fund. This means that every time you spend money at Sleeping Lady, you are supporting the Icicle Fund. Which, in turn, ensures the Icicle Fund can help even more local non-profits in providing wildfire preparedness, arts for kids and adults, hiking trails, open spaces and many other community benefits that enhance the quality of life right here where you love to visit. For more information see www.sleepinglady.com/stay-and-give. php and https://iciclefund.org/sleeping-lady-mountain-resort.

## Methow Conservancy Programs

#### May 2, 3-4:30 pm, Spring Flower Walk through the

Heckendorn Hillside. Join Mary Kiesau as you meander across the hillside uncovering the surprising variety of wildflowers in the shrub steppe! Registration is necessary and space is limited to 12.

#### May 7, 7 - 8 pm, at the Barn. Reflections on Salmon

**Recovery.** Join recently retired local Bureau of Reclamation fisheries biologist Jennifer Molesworth who has worked in the Valley for over 20 years, as she takes us on a personal account of the genesis of the salmon recovery process, into the modern era, and extrapolates into the future.

May 17, 7-8 pm. Free, location TBD. The **One-of-a-Kind Bird Life of Trinidad and Tabago.** The tropical island and its residents will be coming to the Methow! Martyn Kenefick is a world-renowned ornithologist who has spent the last 15 years leading tours and studying the bird life of Trinidad and Tabago. May 18, 8 am – noon. **The Dual Life of our Spring Migrants**. Join world renowned ornithologist Martyn Kenefick from Trinidad and Tabago as we go bird watching in the Methow Valley and hear the other side of the story of our spring migrants as we get the South American perspective on their life histories. Registration is necessary and space is limited to 12. May 20, 8 - 9:30 am. **Spring Bird Walk with Mary**. Join Mary Kiesau for a morning bird walk in a place you've probably never been. This is a good time to brush up on those bird songs! Registration is necessary and space is limited to 12.

For more information or to sign up for any of these activities, see www.methowconservancy.org/enews.html or contact us at 996-2870 or info@methowconservancy.org

#### by Susan Ballinger, Wenatchee

by Heather A. Wallis Murphy, Leavenworth

from the Methow Conservancy

### Birds Bring People Together at Malheur NWR

The Harney County Migratory Bird Festival (April 11-14) is winding down today. Out of Burns, Oregon, the festival covers the Malheur Refuge, the Silvies River flood plain, and Steen's Mountain. One third of the bird species in North America can be found in these areas at some time during the year. Half of all Ross's Geese in the western hemisphere migrate through this region. It's not surprising that Harney County is considered to be one of the west's best birding sites.

All the field trips at the festival were small groups in vans and led by several biologists. Our favorite trip was the Thursday evening Owl Prowl. We found Burrowing Owls on a neighboring ranch owned by the friend of one biologist. The rancher rode up on her horse to meet us. The owl pair posed at the opening of their burrow, blinking at us for ten minutes with their incredibly cute eyes. We continued to the Malheur Refuge and found Great Horned Owls roosting at the headquarters, and traveling down a restricted road in the refuge, we watched twelve Short-eared Owls flying low, courting, and one owl shooting up into the sky and dropping in fluttering display, shooting back up and then disappearing into the low clouds. One of our biologists was a Golden Eagle researcher and showed us a new eagle nest with two Golden Eagles that he had been following for years. After dark we called various owls, but no show. You can't have everything.

The Sunday morning presentation by Dan Streiffert at the Malheur headquarters focused on his exquisite bird photography in the refuge. Participants then did their own photography on the grounds of the headquarters including the bird observation blind dedicated to David Marshall, father of

### Help Protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Over 1.2 million comments were submitted to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on the draft Environmental Impact Statement regarding the oil and gas leasing proposal for the coastal plain. If YOU made one of those comments, thank YOU! It will take BLM some time to review and consider all those comments.

#### What else can you DO?

1) Take a few moments right now and call your House Congressional Representative and ask them to sign on to H.R. 1146 the Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act, introduced by Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA) and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). Bottom Line: Passage of H.R.1146 will ensure there is no oil and gas development on the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge by repealing the mandate to drill and restoring legislative protections. Join with the Gwich'in people and the majority of the American public in supporting this important legislation and doing all YOU can to stop oil and gas development. Currently 115 Representatives have signed Wenatchee photographer, John Marshall.

Our schedule allowed plenty of time on our own to revisit sites introduced in "Birding the Hotspots" and "Silvies River Flood Plain". We were delighted to watch thousands of Ross's and Snow Geese fly over our campsite as they moved daily from one pasture to another.

The Harney County Migratory Bird Festival was a success in several ways. One hundred and thirty species were observed in the four days of the festival with talented leaders guiding on the field trips. But the festival also helps in healing, uniting and moving forward for a small community that has suffered much in the past.



Virginia Rail photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

#### by Mary Gallgher, Lake Wenatchee

on to H.R.1146 but we need at least 150! Neither Rep. Kim Schrier nor Rep. Dan Newhouse have added their support. Use your voice, because they know you will use your vote: **Congresswoman Kim Schrier Washington D.C. - 202-225-7761 Congressman Dan Newhouse Washington D.C. - 202-225-5816** 

2) Participate in the 2019 Great American Arctic Birding Challenge. Birds migrate from all fifty US states and many other countries to spend their summer in Alaska's Arctic. How many of these spring migrants can you find in your state? Find two to five friends and form a team, pick a name and join in the fun! Share your birding adventures with family and friends and on social media. Awareness is how caring begins. This is my second year on the prize-winning MIXED FLOCK team. We are a Mixed Flock because some of us reside on the west side and others live here on the east side! We are good! Don't wait, you are out birding anyway, so register your team online before May 1. Go to www.AudubonAlaska.org for complete contest rules and prizes.

#### by Merry Roy, Wenatchee

#### May Wild Phlox

North Central Washington Audubon Society Post Office Box 2934 Wenatchee, WA 98807

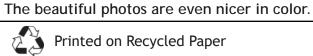
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#### North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar Items in **bold** text are sponsored or co-sponsored by NCWAS

May 1 and 15	Beebe Springs Bird Walk	1st and 3rd Wednesdays with Virginia Palumbo. See our website for details
May 15	Horan Area Monthly Bird Walk	Every 3rd Wednesday. See our website for details
May 4, 18, June 1, 15	Sleeping Lady Bird Walks	With Heather Murphy, See page 6
May 4	Global Big Day	See https://ebird.org/news/global-big-day-4-may-2019
May 11	Beginning Birding Field Trip	Near Winthrop, with Janet Bauer. See our website
May 15-20	Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest	www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.org
May 23	NCWAS Social	Get Social in Twisp. See page 2 for details
May 24-27	Wenas Audubon Campout	Birds, Flowers, Butterflies. See https://wenasaudubon.org/
June 1	NCWAS Four-County Big Day	Count all the NCWAS Birds! See page 1
June 8	Leavenworth Field Trip	with Mark Johnston. See page 5
June 15	Twisp Field Trip	with Mark Johnston. See page 5



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You can find the Wild Phlox online at our website - www.ncwaudubon.org



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