



Another Successful HawkFest

On Saturday, September 14th, NCW Audubon together with the Methow Valley Ranger District and HawkWatch International held the Fourth Annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival. Shuttles carried participants from Pateros Memorial Park up to Chelan Ridge every hour to watch biologists and volunteers count raptors as they make their way south for the winter. Visitors encountered newly-banded birds up close as the birds were set free. A record number of folks came to the festival this year; over 75 people traveled up to the ridge.



A newly-banded raptor at Chelan Ridge
photo by Micah Shearer

The day started early with a field trip to the Bridgeport Bar area led by Jenny Graevell and Meredith Spencer. They saw about 30 species of birds, including American White Pelican, Red-naped Sapsucker, Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird, and three species of warblers.

Folks kept a sharp eye at the park and saw twenty species of birds including a Common Loon, American Pipit, Northern Shoveler, and Bonaparte's Gull.



An owl on display at the festival in Pateros.
photo by Micah Shearer

The WSU Raptor Club and Okanogan Wildlife League arrived with raptors to display at the park. Among the birds were a Barn Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Western Screech Owl, American Kestrel, and Great-horned Owl. Larry and Penny Tobiska were busy at their booth with an owl pellet dissection kit and bird education materials. Jim Ulrich from Wild Birds Unlimited displayed a variety of binoculars and scopes and was gracious enough to loan out some binoculars for those in need. Trail's End Bookstore, Daniel's Birdhouses, and the North Cascades Base Camp had many visitors. We were also pleased to have David Schearer play his special brand of acoustic music.

Team Naturaliza, with Heather Murphy and Norma Gallegos, led well-attended

Volume 47 #2 November 2013
by Richard Scranton, Wenatchee
bilingual field trips along the river.

Their group also visited Chelan Ridge to enjoy the activities there. We hope to build on their participation in the future.

We can't thank the Forest Service enough for the time, effort and other resources they put into this event. Biologist Kent Woodruff worked tirelessly leading the events at the ridge and coordinating the shuttle schedules. Visitors at the ridge enjoyed his informative and entertaining explanations about raptor migration. USFS personnel also had a booth in the park with rangers roaming the grounds to answer questions from the public.

Feedback was very positive for this year's event and I hope we see many of the participants again next year. If you couldn't make it this time please be sure to plan for next year.



Mark Oswood, past president of NCW Audubon, discusses birds with visitors to the 'What's that Bird' booth at the festival in Pateros
photo by Richard Scranton

The mission of the
North Central Washington Audubon Society
 is "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing
 on birds and their habitats, for the benefit of people and
 the biological diversity of North Central Washington."

North Central Washington Audubon Society

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North Central Washington Audubon Society is on Facebook too

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

What Happened to October?

by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley

Did you notice that there was not an October issue of the Wild Phlox? Due to technical issues, I was unable to produce one and I offer my heartfelt apologies for missing an issue. As with everything NCWAS does, the Phlox is an all-volunteer effort. I use my own computer and sadly its hard drive gave up the ghost in September. While replacing it was a relatively simple matter by an experienced repair person, getting the software reinstalled was not simple. It required a huge amount of effort and time on my part and technical support from well-meaning folks in far away countries. Fortunately, most of my backups worked and I did not lose very many files. It is good to have that behind me and to be back at work.



American Kestrel
 photo by Gregg Thompson

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.

NCW Audubon got some great news earlier this month – we have been awarded a grant to do the web site development for our new online birding guide! Watch for an article about this exciting development in the December Wild Phlox. More good news is that we have a new board member from Ferry County! We have long hoped to recruit someone from that far-flung corner of our region and we are looking forward to learning about birding opportunities from Ruth – the Bird Lady of Ferry County! Thanks Ruth and welcome to the NCWAS board. You can read more about Ruth on page five.

Editor's Notes

After many painful hours and lots of frustration trying to get my computer software reinstalled last month, I finally found the right tech support person and feeling like this time, it might actually work, I went outside for a breath of fresh air. I heard a familiar sound and looked up to see seven Sandhill Cranes flying, maybe fifty feet above me, headed south. The sound and the sight brought tremendous relief and joy to my overburdened brain and nearly brought tears to my eyes. There is great healing potential in the natural world and we must not forget about it.

Birding is slower this time of year but the weather has been fabulous – sunny with blue skies and perfect temperatures to be out walking, riding, hiking and enjoying the fall colors. In my neck of the woods, many of the aspen leaves simply turned dark and fell without turning yellow. One botanist speculated there may have been a fungus that caused this. Fortunately it did not affect the cottonwoods and they have put on a lovely show. High in the mountains, the western and alpine larches are glorious just now. On a hike to Cutthroat Lake the other day I enjoyed glimpses of a Varied Thrush and constant high-pitched calls of chickadees and kinglets. Maybe birding just seems slower to me right now because we recently added a new puppy to our household and I am almost constantly accompanied by a nine-week old Labrador! I confess to looking down more than I look up these days.

I have often wondered why our state bird is the Willow Goldfinch. Recently that question was brought up on Tweepers, the Washington state birding list serv and this answer was provided: At one time - up til about 1950 - English names were commonly applied to subspecies of birds, not just to species. This practice has been largely abandoned in the last 50 years or so. The Willow Goldfinch is a subspecies (*Carduelis tristis salicamans*) of the American Goldfinch. Ironically, the Willow Goldfinch is found mainly in California and Baja California, and has never occurred in Washington. The two subspecies of American Goldfinch that occur in Washington are *Carduelis tristis jewetti* and *Carduelis tristis pallidus*. So although there is a Willow Goldfinch, it is not found in Washington, and the use of that term for Washington's state bird is definitely a misnomer! It would certainly be a good idea to rename the state bird as the "American Goldfinch", the name which is almost universally used for that species.

NCW Recent Bird Sightings

compiled from the ncwabird email list
and Tweepers

A Green Heron was reported near the Horan Natural Area at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia Rivers early in September. I wonder if only one person saw this unusual bird for the area? At about that same time in East Wenatchee, there were three kinds of hummingbirds – Anna's, Rufous and a late Calliope, all taking advantage of a bird-friendly garden. A Peregrine Falcon was reported between Methow and Carlton near highway 153. September 15, the day after the Hawk Migration Festival, Andy and Ellen Stepniewski led a group of birders to Slate Peak where they observed nine species of diurnal raptors and about fifty individuals, with Red-tailed Hawks being the most numerous. They also saw Turkey Vultures, Osprey, Northern Harriers, Sharp-shinned Hawks, a Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrels, Merlins and Prairie Falcons. In addition they saw a number of songbirds including American Pipits, Horned Larks and Clark's Nutcrackers. I was up there a week or two later and saw a Prairie Falcon dive bombing an accipiter, probably a Cooper's Hawk. Say's Phoebes were reported in the Methow Valley as late

as September 25th. In early October a canoeist spotted all three mergansers swimming next to each other at the same place as the Green Heron a month prior. On October 20th a birder saw a Snow Goose mixed in with Canada Geese off of Walla Walla Point Park in Wenatchee. Two White-throated Sparrows were reported at Rock Island Pond in Douglas County. At my house I am seeing lots of finches at the feeder with the occasional accipiter. In the ponderosa pine trees there are many Clark's Nutcrackers and White-breasted Nuthatches. We are seeing more California Quail this year than in the last five years we've been here. Bald Eagles are replacing the Osprey along the river. Yesterday a friend saw this interesting interaction: She said, "as I was driving up the Methow Valley I saw a calf chasing a raven that stayed just out of its reach. The raven landed on a fence post and turned to face the calf just as I drove by them. The calf was putting its nose up to the raven. There was no good place to stop and a car behind me. I wanted to keep watching. They were so obviously playing. Are they friends? Do they know each other?"

Knaster? Knapweed? Aster? Hybrid? Or what?

I saw the bud of knapweed and the flower of aster. Now my big question will tag along... Can aster and knapweed hybridize? I got my question from a squash that hybridized in our garden. And that is how I learned about hybridizing.

Observations:

- Two feet wide
- Two feet tall
- Buds are half an inch in size (long)
- Fluffy seeds – wind carries fluff which carries seeds
- After you pick the flower, it still goes to seed
- Residue tastes weird

I measured the plant, I wrote notes about the plant, I held a seed holder without the seeds, and I took plant samples and I looked at the bud with a dissecting scope.

I contacted an expert. His name is Dana Visalli (editor of the *Methow Naturalist* and three books on NW wildflowers). He told us whether or not aster and knapweed hybridize, and gave us some clues to help us figure out what it is.

So my big question has come to a conclusion. Aster and knapweed cannot hybridize. They cannot hybridize because they are not in the same genus. Now the answer of what it is will continue: We used Dana's book and clues to give us this answer: My plant is Hoary Aster.

I looked at a diagram of a flower in the sunflower family. All the flowers that are in the family are composite flowers. Hoary aster is in the sunflower family so therefore hoary aster is a composite flower.

P.S. Composite means made up of many parts (in my

by Madeline Ashmore, Okanogan Highlands dictionary). In the eyes of a botanist it means many disc flowers and ray flowers all in one.

A different picture shows the main parts of a flower although it is not a composite. I got that picture from Dana Visalli and I got another picture from my mom who got it on the internet.

Further question: Is hoary aster a weed or is it native? Hoary aster can compete with cheat grass and knapweed plus it is native. We were really excited when we found out that it can compete with cheat grass and knapweed! This is where I found my answer to my question: http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_maca2.pdf

Then I collected seeds to help control weeds on our property. We will have to plant them first. And we will plant them where we pulled weeds.

editor's note: Madeline lives in Okanogan County near the Canadian border, in the hills leading to the Okanogan Highlands, at 3,000 feet elevation. She is seven years old and enrolled in a school

program that allows her to do a large portion of her school work from home, with regular classroom time also. Her time at home allows her to keep a close watch on the plant and animal life around her, learning firsthand through observation. She is also passionate about supporting the highland Common Loon population and can be seen each year at the Barter Faire, pulling her red wagon full of handcrafted items for sale to support loon banding, research, and fish stocking. Last month's Phlox featured an article titled 'Teaching Young Naturalists' by her teacher, Christine Olson.



Madeline using her microscope photo by Julie Ashmore

Native Plant Restoration Garden Honors Jeff Parsons

By Amy Massey, WRI

To continue to improve sustainability of habitat, ecosystem and native biological diversity, the staff and board of Wenatchee River Institute (WRI) invite you to join in creating a native garden, to celebrate and honor Jeff's contributions.

Sundays, November 3 & 10

Noon to 4 PM

How can you get involved?

- Come to a work party on a Sunday afternoon
- Buy plants for the garden at a work party, \$5 & up

- Donate to the project by sending a check to WRI, PO Box 2073, Leavenworth, WA 98826
 - Celebration POTLUCK November 10, 5 to 7 PM in the Barn. RSVP info@wenatcheeriverinstitute.org
- During his tenure at WRI, Jeff was involved in such community-based programs as LIFE2 Earth Day Community Fair, Leavenworth Community Farmers Market, Think Local First, E. Lorene Young Community Garden, NCW Audubon, Upper Valley Historical Society,

Icicle Arts, and more. His efforts have enriched the cultural profile of this community. We thank him!

For information, please call Amy Massey at 387-1901, or email info@wenatcheeriverinstitute.org or visit <http://wenatcheeriverinstitute.org/news/native-plant-restoration-honor-jeff-parsons>

In addition to being the founding director of WRI, Jeff is a long-time NCWAS member and also the current president of our board of directors.

Introducing a New Board Member

NCWAS is excited to have a new board member and even more excited that she is in Ferry County! We have long tried to recruit someone from that distant corner of our four-county region. Here is her introduction to us:

My name is Ruth Daugherty and I have lived along the Kettle River in beautiful Curlew, Washington since moving from Wenatchee in October 2006. Prior to moving, I attended WVC where I had the pleasure of learning and studying under the stupendous Dr. Dan. I have been an animal and nature lover my entire life, but the classes I took at WVC are what transformed me into a hard-core bird nerd.

In September 2009 I began writing for The Ferry County View, our local newspaper. After only seven months my health forced me to take a hiatus. When my friend who had been writing "BirdBits" moved away I called and asked if I could take over the column which I just now realize has been a smidge over two years ago. Over that time I have

by Ruth Daugherty, Curlew

become known as "The Bird Lady". I include my contact info after each column so I have people e-mail, send me photos, and call almost every week. It's a blast!

I have been "recruiting" friends and locals who want to join a birding group and/or go on a field trip. There was a birding festival here about ten years ago and I hope to get one started again. There are so many people here who love birding and just as many who want to learn. This is where all of you come in!

Thank you so much for inviting me to join your board. I am honored, excited, and am looking forward to meeting all of you in person! You can find me on facebook - The Bird Lady/ Ferry Co. View "Bird Bits" columnist <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Bird-Lady-Ferry-Co-View-Bird-Bits-columnist/1395690337331596>

editor's note - the Dr. Dan Ruth refers to is Dr. Dan Stephens, a long-time NCWAS representative

Mark Your Calendars for the Christmas Bird Count Season!

Compiled by Teri J Pieper from local count compilers and the National Audubon Society

The 114th Christmas Bird Count will take place from December 14, 2013 through January 5, 2014. Tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission - often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the Holiday season.

Our four-county region hosts six separate Christmas Bird Counts. They are:

Twisp – December 15 (996-8168 or rapakivi@methow.com for more info)

Bridgeport – December 21 (686-76551 or merdave@homenetnw.net for more info)

Leavenworth – December 22 (393-0088 or design@thedesignranch.com for more info)

Chelan – December 28 (seasley@nwi.net or 682-2318; ptsnorth@flymail.net or 682-9653 for more info)

Wenatchee – December 29 (dstephens@wvc.edu for more info)

Okanogan – January 4 (429-8167 for more info)

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition -- and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

For more information about Christmas Bird Counts, please see <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

Upcoming Water Bird ID Class in Wenatchee

by Penelope Tobiska, Wenatchee

Watch the December Phlox for the big announcement of our winter water birds workshop series in partnership with the Wenatchee Naturalist. It is tentatively scheduled for the second half of February, a good time to work on learning new things with other winter-bound naturalists. In addition to classroom time there will be field trips to practice newly-learned identification skills.



Lesser Scaup
photo by Gregg Thompson

Some of my Favorite Birds

by Meredith Spencer, Bridgeport

Some of my favorite birds are on my Christmas tree. Too early to think about Christmas? Never!

I have bird ornaments made from glass, plastic, wood, pewter, felt, clay and feathers. Many of my favorites are from the Old World Christmas store located in Spokane. Old World Christmas specializes in duplicating the mouth-blown ornaments that came from Europe many years ago.

The Spokane store sells the ornaments “below wholesale prices.” Most are \$4.00. Small ones are \$1.50 and the ones called “inside art” are usually \$2.00. Except for July the store is only open from the second Saturday in October through Christmas. Hours are 11:00 to 3:00

Sunday - Friday, and 11:00 to 5:00 on Saturday. They do not advertise and do not answer phone calls. The store is located at 4005 East Main, which is one block west of the Fairgrounds.

You can find their catalog online (www.oldworldChristmas.com) and if you add Spokane to the line, can see a map. If you’ve never seen their ornaments looking at the catalog is a must. If you collect anything, or have a hobby or activity you enjoy, they will have a ornament to go with it.

Any questions? Feel free to contact me. I’m a huge fan of theirs. 686-76551 or merdave@homenetnw.net

Notes from Mazama

Get your pencil out and write this down: www.flicker.com/photos/pinebird. Opening a column with an email address is a tad unconventional but it will be rewarding. This is the website of Dave Chantler of Winthrop, one of the top bird watchers in the world. I have just spent an hour with him and his tablet looking at incredible photos from his recent trip to Tanzania and adjacent countries. This is his seventh trip to the former “Dark Continent” which he has enlightened, not only with pictures of rare birds, but also the more mundane African wildlife, both on land and awash. It also includes unique flora, like a plant whose cactus-like spines are deadly poisonous to humans.

Here in the Methow it has been, well, kind of boring. As of this mid-October day, we are down to but one duck on the pond, a female Mallard. The ducklings that emerged from the reeds and pond grasses one-third grown are long gone. There was a trio of these dabbling in unison like a dance troupe but no more. We never did see any Wood Duck babies at all, despite at times having a dozen or more adults, male and female, swimming and eating.

The chickadees, Black-capped and Mountain are arriving slowly, thus far in no large numbers. There was one junco among the ‘dees at the feeder, and that was a surprise. Is



Upended Mallards

article and photo by Bob Spiwak, Mazama

climate change significant enough to affect the arrival of one kind and departure of the other?

What has been very significant to many people I’ve spoken with has been the relative drabness of the foliage this year. After the heavy rains in September, some of our expectations were that the colors would be deeper, but instead the leaves are falling earlier with diminished color.

Here at our place at least, the most visible and audible indicator of major change has been the lack, not merely a paucity but an actual lack of squirrels and Steller’s Jays by this time of the month. I have written about the entertainment these characters provide for us and hopefully when the snow flies they’ll

be back in force to harass one another.

A friend, aware of our simple pleasures presented me with a jay-teasing squirrel feeder. A wooden box with a hole in the bottom gives the rodents access to sunflower seeds both in the box and to a large horizontal glass jar that also holds the seeds. Walt Foster, who made the contrivance, says the jays will stand on the glass trying to figure it out as the squirrels laugh at them from within.

Hopefully we’ll see if this is true.

Spring Bird Fest Volunteers Needed

by Jackie Haskins, WRI

Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest 2014 is already around the corner! This year we hope to add more classroom sessions; add a reception with a world-famous National Geographic photographer; fundraise for youth science scholarships; and more... IF we have the volunteer support to make these new

events possible. Volunteers are greatly needed. Volunteer twenty hours or more and become a Friend of Bird Fest, with special privileges and invitations. To learn more call or email Jackie Haskins, Bird Fest Coordinator: 548-7584, jhaskins@wenatcheeriverinstitute.org. Please call today!

Historic California Legislation Bans Lead Ammunition

from the National Audubon Society

On October 11, California became the first state to enact a ban on lead ammunition. Fully one in five California Condors has significant levels of lead in their bloodstream and there is little hope for the species' recovery without this ban.

Lead makes its way through the food chain and is eventually consumed by Condors, Golden Eagles and other predators. Humans can ingest lead from game - and even a trace amount of lead can cause lasting damage to children, in particular. This farsighted legislation will phase out lead ammunition by 2019 and it's our hope that California will once again be the pacesetter for the rest of the nation.

California Audubon, along with the National Humane Society and Defenders of Wildlife, wrote and promoted this legislation. It is a significant victory for conservation and public health. On the policy side, this represents a year's worth of work in the Pacific Flyway and it's a fitting last hurrah for retiring CA Legislative Director Dan Taylor. It took a lot of courage to take on this issue and, indeed, the NRA promised to launch a recall initiative in the district of every legislator who supported this common sense legislation.

David Yarnold, executive director of the National Audubon Society sent out this press release last month. What do you think of a state-wide ban on lead ammunition? Or lead fishing tackle? It is well-known that lead has long-lasting and even lethal, effects on birds, fish and humans. In Washington we've seen dead and dying Trumpeter Swans when they consume lead pellets and Common Loons that were killed by lead fishing tackle.

Happenings at Wenatchee River Institute

by Jackie, Haskins, WRI

North of Hope: A Daughter's Arctic Journey - A RED BARN FRIDAY slideshow and book-signing with author Shannon Polson, November 8 at 7:00 PM, In the Barn at Wenatchee River Institute, 347 Division Street, Leavenworth, In partnership with A Book For All Seasons. A memoir of adventure, tragedy, family, and faith. After a rare grizzly attack kills her parents, a daughter navigates the wilderness of Alaska and of her own heart, and discovers that perhaps no place is beyond the reach of hope.

Ecology of Dam Removal - A RED BARN FRIDAY with Dr. Dennis Dauble, November 15 at 7:00 PM, In partnership with Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group and A Book For All Seasons. Dr. Dauble, aquatic ecologist, fishing enthusiast, sports writer and master of the fisherman's yarn, will discuss dam removal: economic and environmental issues and anticipated effects. His award-winning fisheries guidebook *Fishes of the Columbia Basin* and his story collection *The Barbless Hook* will be available at a book-signing following his slide presentation.

Global Youth Village - December 6 at 7:00 PM, In partnership with Cascade High School International Club. Two short films on youth, money, and the global marketplace. Fun and thought-provoking!

More details at wenatcheeriverinstitute.org call 387-1901

Sparrow

No larger than the cup of my hand.
Staccato breath, trembling wing tips.
Beak wedged between wooden shingle
and side wall of second floor ledge.
How it got there, I would never understand.
Nothing but death waited.
No predator to finish it off quickly.
No help from me, being beyond my human grasp.
No way to reach out and hold it in my hand.
Nothing to do but watch the bird and feel the clock.
Time passed without mercy.
I sensed the season beginning to change.
Then motion. One weak peep, and then another.
Its black glass eyes stared into mine; a lesson to teach.
Its wire thin legs straightened, holding onto hope.
One quick flutter ... I exhaled ... It reached the rail;
fanned its tail and burst into song.
The miracle of melody pulsed through my heart.
"His eye is on the sparrow." seemed the best place to start.
I hummed the tune all day long.

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November Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

November 3 & 10	Create a Native Plant Garden	In honor of Jeff Parsons! See page 4
December 15	Twisp Christmas Bird Count	See page 5 for more info
December 21	Bridgeport Christmas Bird Count	See page 5 for more info
December 22	Leavenworth Christmas Bird Count	See page 5 for more info
December 28	Chelan Christmas Bird Count	See page 5 for more info
December 29	Wenatchee Christmas Bird Count	See page 5 for more info
January 4	Omak/Okanogan Christmas Bird Count	See page 5 for more info



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