



Volume 50 #3 November 2016

## Notes from an Accomplished Conference

by Mark Oswood, Wenatchee

The Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) conference is the annual get-together of all 25 Audubon chapters in Washington State. ACOW is migratory. This year it was in Wenatchee; next year it will be in western Washington.

The first day (7 October) was a day of special-purpose meetings and workshops, held at the Wenatchee Community Center. The Education Workshop was old-fashioned show-and-tell. Whidbey Audubon has a large collection of stuffed birds (700+), study skins, wings, and bird skulls. These bird artifacts are used in adult birding classes, in school programs, and in a touchable exhibition, held annually. Could this be done in NCWAS? Do we have any taxidermists in our membership? Audubon Rockies (Wyoming and Colorado) has developed (with USFWS and other partners) a Sagebrush Ecosystem Curriculum for grades 4-8. Some of the activities and ideas in this curriculum seem eminently transferable to NCWAS and adaptable for our NCWAS collaborations with educators.

Friday evening culminated in Paul Bannick's presentation of his new book, *Owl: a Year in the Lives of North American Owls*. Paul's presentations are an inspiring mix of hard-won images and stories from deep field time.

The second day (8 October) was



Kent Woodruff shows a beautiful Sharp-shinned Hawk to a field trip at Chelan Ridge.  
photo by Richard Scranton.

held at the Confluence Technology Center, in Wenatchee. We had a tour of DNR conservation priorities by Peter Goldmark (Commissioner of Public Lands), a panel discussion on fire ecology in eastern Washington, and a review of Marbled Murrelet management. Audubon Washington staff outlined work on coastal estuaries, the sagebrush steppe, and the climate for climate legislation. David Ringer, the Chief Network Officer for National Audubon Society, reminded us that Audubon chapters are the primary producers of the Audubon ecosystem

The third day (9 October) was the traditional ACOW field trip, led by NCWAS board members Richard Scranton and Mark Johnston. A large contingent (28 people) car-pooled to the Chelan Ridge HawkWatch site. Kent Woodruff (senior biologist with the USFS) showed field trip

participants how migrating raptors get counted and sometimes captured and tagged. Releasing a live raptor and territorial views capped the day.

If you're thinking "I wish that I'd gone to this ACOW" you could keep early October open next year and when the dates for ACOW are announced, leap up and go.

*Paul Bannick will be in Winthrop with his new book later this year. See page 6 to find out where and when.*



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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North Central Washington Audubon Society is on Facebook too

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



Spruce Grouse on the Libby Lake trail  
 photo by Peter Bauer

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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](http://www.audubon.org) or drop us a note and we will send you a form for a special rate introductory membership.

November. Honestly, it's not my favorite month. The weather is often gray and for most of this month, the precipitation falls as rain and not snow. The days are short and dark. It's that time when the delightful fall weather is mostly finished and the wonderful world of winter isn't quite here. It's a good time for inside projects that have been neglected for months while we all played outside for months and months. To that end, I should embark on a long list of items to accomplish before the snow falls and I am once again spending as much time outside as I possibly can.

Our morning walks are frosty and birds are much fewer than just a couple of weeks ago. I have noticed a Northern Shrike a couple of times – a good indicator of a change in the seasons. The previously numerous White-crowned Sparrows have moved on, replaced by House Finches and American Goldfinches at the newly-filled feeders.

Fall colors have been outstanding here in the Methow. Aspens and cottonwoods line the river while up high, western and alpine larches have been stunning. Add in the willows, water birch, dogwood and a few other species and it's a kaleidoscope of colors out there. For me, the warm fall colors echo the warmth of hills covered in arrowleaf balsamroot in the spring. Around here, we often say we have three seasons – white, green and brown but somewhere in there, we should add yellow.



An Osprey from summer  
photo by Peter Bauer



Song Sparrow  
photo by Peter Bauer

It is time to plan for winter travels. Many people have the opportunity to visit warmer climates with interesting flora and fauna, often foreign to the rest of us in NCW. Are you going somewhere interesting? Perhaps you'd like to contribute a story to the Wild Phlox about the natural history of a new place? Our readers do enjoy those reports.

In other travel plans, don't forget that Christmas Bird Count season will soon be upon us. Here, in NCW we have quite a few – Wenatchee, Leavenworth, Chelan, Bridgeport, Twisp and Okanogan. You can see a list of the CBC's around the state at <http://wos.org/cbc/>. Next month I will feature a list of the local counts and their dates and coordinators. If your travels take you out of the region for the holiday season, you can also participate during your trip. Christmas Bird Counts are held all over the world. You can find more information on the dates and locations at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).

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## NCW Recent Bird Sightings

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

American Three-toed Woodpeckers were seen on the Maple Pass trail and near Harts Pass. Mountain Bluebirds and Townsend's Solitaires were also seen near Harts Pass. The first of the season Rough-legged Hawk was reported in Douglas County. Harlequin Ducks were seen on the Columbia above Rocky Reach and also on Lake Chelan. On the Columbia between Wells and Rocky Reach there were American White Pelicans, Surf Scoters, Blue Winged Teal, Red-necked Grebe and Cassin's Vireo. Confluence Park had a White-headed Woodpecker and Pygmy Nuthatch. A Long-tailed Duck was observed on the Columbia from Chelan Falls Park. From the Wells Dam visitors' center observers saw a Red-throated Loon, Pacific Loon, Red-necked Grebe and Sabine's Gull. Bonaparte's Gulls were seen at Confluence Park along with American Pipits. Black-backed, American Three-toed and Hairy Woodpeckers were seen near Haney Meadows in Chelan County. Spruce Grouse were seen near Salmon Meadows in Okanogan County. A Sandhill Crane was reported at Davis Lake and also Pearygin Lake near Winthrop. At Chelan Ridge, they saw Black-backed and White-headed Woodpeckers, a Yellow-headed blackbird and a flock of Snow Geese in addition to lots of raptors.

# Wenatchee Naturalist Wins National Award for Outstanding Volunteer Project!

by Amanda Tedrow,  
ANROSP Vice President

The Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs (ANROSP) concluded its national conference with an awards ceremony held at the Randall Davey Audubon Center and Sanctuary.

The Wenatchee Naturalist Website received the 2016 ANROSP Award for Outstanding Volunteer Project. This award recognizes innovative and exceptional volunteer projects conducted by or for ANROSP member organizations. Volunteer Wenatchee Naturalist, Leslie Bigos, designed and built a modern, device-friendly, WORD PRESS Wenatchee Naturalist website that is open to all and contains resources of wide interest to North Central Washington individuals, conservation organizations, and to 150 local Wenatchee Naturalists: [www.wenatcheenaturalist.com/](http://www.wenatcheenaturalist.com/). Volunteer Wenatchee Naturalist photographers Leslie Bigos, Dave Hillstad, and Lisa Robinson provided images of landscapes, plants, and animals for free use on the website in course materials, including the “Learn 10 Game” set of 100 common plants and animals. Leslie Bigos also created and donated a Quizlet game that allows students to practice and learn to name 100 common species. Jason O’Brien of the Oregon Master Naturalist Program accepted the award on behalf of the Wenatchee Naturalist Program.

Amy Rager, ANROSP President and Minnesota Master Naturalist Program Director, said “ANROSP provides member programs an opportunity to share their best work in the areas

of Outstanding Educational Materials, Outstanding Volunteer Project, Outstanding Team, Outstanding Program Evaluation and Program of the Year. Each year ANROSP is proud to highlight programs from across the United States in each of these categories.” Award applications are peer reviewed and selection is made by the ANROSP Awards Committee, chaired by the ANROSP Vice President.

The Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs is a national network of natural resource education and service programs which provides leadership, information, and resources to support the establishment and expansion of its member programs. ANROSP promotes active stewardship by supporting science-based outreach and service programs in the field of natural resources. Our partnering programs train conservation volunteers to enhance and expand natural resource conservation and education across the nation, and include programs such as:

- Master Naturalist
- Certified Citizen Naturalist Volunteer
- Master Watershed Steward
- Coverts Programs
- Master Conservationist
- and many more programs nationwide

For more information please visit [ANROSP.org](http://ANROSP.org) and [www.wenatcheenaturalist.com](http://www.wenatcheenaturalist.com)

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## Pine Grosbeaks

by Art Campbell, Winthrop

On a Thanksgiving walk along Bear Creek Road, my wife, Michelle, and I heard the soft, melodious whistling of one of our favorite birds, the Pine Grosbeak. Locating the sound, we saw six of these large finches moving through a roadside grove of trees. Rosy red on the rump, head, upper back, and underparts, male Pine Grosbeaks may appear to be a male Purple or Cassin’s Finch on steroids – only slightly smaller than a robin.

Spend a moment watching Pine Grosbeaks, however, and you’ll notice that in addition to their larger size, the grosbeaks differ from their smaller finch cousins in having blackish wings with two bold white wingbars. Compared to the males, female Pine Grosbeaks are relatively drab – mostly grayish with an olive or greenish head and rump, but with white wingbars like the males. Female Pine Grosbeaks are unstreaked below, a characteristic that distinguishes them from female Purple and Cassin’s Finches. Pine Grosbeaks may also be mistaken for White-winged Crossbills. As the crossbill’s name suggests, it has white-wingbars like the Pine Grosbeak. But the rare White-winged Crossbill is about two-thirds the size of a Pine

Grosbeak, has a dark spot between the eye and the bill, and also sports distinctively crossed bill tips.

Pine Grosbeaks are uncommon to rare birds found in boreal and high mountain forests across North America and Eurasia. In the Methow watershed and elsewhere in north central Washington, they reside in the higher mountain forests up to treeline, but may descend to nearby lowlands in winter. Like many of the finch species, Pine Grosbeaks make occasional, unpredictable large-scale incursions into areas outside their normal range. These movements are called irruptions.

With their heavy conical bill, typical of finches, Pine Grosbeaks feed primarily on seeds, berries, buds, and other vegetable matter. Female Pine Grosbeaks lay two to five eggs, which they incubate for two weeks. The young fledge two to three weeks after hatching, and stay with the parents for several weeks more after leaving the nest.

Pine Grosbeaks are tolerant of humans and can often be approached closely, but are also typically quiet, unobtrusive, and easy to miss. On your fall and winter trips outside, keep alert and you may see these delightful birds.

# NCWAS Fall Field Trips

On November 5, join us for a winter waterfowl trip to the Manson Lakes (Wapato, Dry, Roses Lakes), led by Virginia Palumbo. This will be a good introductory trip for newer birders, with the lakes usually hosting large numbers of wintering waterfowl. We can expect to see Redheads, Canvasbacks, Shovelers, Hooded Mergansers, Ruddy Ducks, and both Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes, along with grebes, Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, an occasional Loon, and oftentimes Tundra or Trumpeter swans. Meet at Virginia's house, and carpool from there, leaving at 8:30 and returning at 11:30 am. To sign up for this field trip, please contact Virginia at palumbov@nwi.net or 682-5969.

On December 10, join trip leader, Mark Johnston for a day of birding in a variety of habitats including the Waterville Plateau, Bridgeport Bar and along the Columbia River. We expect to find a nice mix of resident and migrant species that spend the winter in this region. Please bring a lunch, snacks, liquids, and dress for the weather. We will meet in Chelan and

by Virginia Palumbo, Chelan and Mark Johnston, Leavenworth

depart at 8:00 am, returning by 5:00 pm. Carpool cost: \$30 per vehicle to be shared equally by riders. To sign up, please call Mark at 548-5766 or via email at s697striata@frontier.com. Limited to eleven birders.



American Dipper  
photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

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## The Handbook of Bird Biology, 3rd Edition Have the World of Birds at Your Fingertips!

from the  
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

The Handbook of Bird Biology is an essential reference for birdwatchers, college students, and educators. Since its first publication by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in 1972, tens of thousands of students and bird enthusiasts have transformed their understanding of the avian world using this comprehensive text. The fully revised 3rd edition provides expanded and updated coverage written by world-renowned ornithologists from Cornell and beyond as well as full color illustrations and an online companion media library.

What's inside the book

1. Why Study Birds?
2. Avian Diversity and Classification
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6. Avian Anatomy
7. Bird Physiology
8. Avian Food and Foraging
9. Avian Mating and Social Behavior
10. Avian Vocal Behavior
11. Breeding Biology of Birds
12. Avian Migration and Dispersal
13. Ecology of Bird Populations

14. Bird Communities
15. Bird Conservation

In addition to the full color illustrations in the book, each chapter has been supplemented with complimentary online material to help you learn more. Rich multimedia content illustrates and expands on content from the book, all organized in a chapter-by-chapter online library.

You can learn even more with the comprehensive Ornithology course. Study birds with the comprehensive ornithology course from the Cornell Lab using the Handbook of Bird Biology, 3rd Edition as your guide. Read each chapter in the Handbook, explore in more depth using the online materials embedded in this course, and then take the exams to earn your badge and certificate.

The Course Experience: Ornithology, from the Cornell Lab, will deepen your understanding of birds and help you master everything from anatomy and behavior to ecology and conservation. World-wide in scope, the experience will broaden your bird knowledge and give you a

strong foundation in all things avian. You will be following in the footsteps of thousands of others who have transformed their perspective on birds with the predecessor to this course, The Home Study Course in Bird Biology, over its forty year history. This course is designed for those interested in learning college-level ornithology at their own pace, from anywhere, without the college credit price tag.

What's Inside the Course:

This course steps you through each chapter from the textbook. Lessons contain a short video from your instructors introducing key insights and curated collections of online resources to expand your knowledge base. Exams are divided up into individual quizzes that take 15-20 minutes to complete and provide immediate feedback to correct misconceptions and reinforce important facts. An expanded online glossary helps you learn how to express yourself like an ornithologist. You will also have the opportunity to have your questions answered by course instructors.

For more information see [www.birds.cornell.edu/](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/)

# More Junior Birdwatchers and a Colorblind Photographer

by Susan Sampson, Wenatchee

At least 70 fifth-graders from Clovis Point Elementary School in East Wenatchee are now graduates of “What’s That Bird?”. They met at Confluence Park on Columbus Day and used NCW Audubon’s binoculars to spot replica birds, to identify them from field guides, and to check them off their first life lists. They were treated to sights of real birds, as well: Just as one group was being introduced to the program, the kids spotted a live Downy Woodpecker working on the side of the nearest tree. A few crows and gulls flew over, Yellow-rumped Warblers worked over a bare tree, and over 100 Canada Geese (including some Cackling Geese) added to the cacophony from the nearby field.

A new member of NCWAS helped operate the program. Bruce McCammon has been in Wenatchee for about a year. He maintains a blog in which he publishes his own bird photography, and invites us to check it out at <https://bmccammon.wordpress.com>. His blog calls him a “Colorblind Photographer,” so he was empathetic with one of our students who was able to see only a few primary colors, but who spotted our birds all the same.

Mark Oswood organized and led the program, and Caitilin Newman and Susan Sampson also helped.

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## An Exploration of Nature, Ice & Life

by Mary Kiesau,  
The Methow Conservancy

Methow Conservancy First Tuesday program - November 1, 7:00-8:30 pm, at The Merc Playhouse in Twisp, free.

Join Alasdair Turner, a Seattle-based adventure and documentary photographer, for an exploration of Antarctica’s McMurdo Sound region. From vast ice to the historic huts left behind by explorers Scott and Shackleton to today’s sprawling base of buildings that make up the U.S. McMurdo Station, his work tells the story of scientific research in Antarctica through a lens imbued with stunning photographic imagery, big picture explanations, and even a little humor.

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## See Paul Bannick in Winthrop

by Mary Kiesau,  
The Methow Conservancy

The Methow Conservancy’s annual year-end Social and Community Program *Owl: A Year in The Lives of North American Owls* with Paul Bannick will be held December 6th from 7:00 - 8:30 pm at the Winthrop Barn, and is free and open to everyone.

In his new book, Paul Bannick uses his intimate and dramatic images to illustrate four different nesting owl species - Northern Pygmy, Burrowing, Great Gray, and Snowy - throughout the course of the year in four distinct habitats. Each stage in an owl’s life is chronicled: courtship, mating, and nesting in spring; fledging and feeding of young in summer; dispersal and learning independence in fall; and, finally, winter’s migration. Unusual irruptions and the everyday struggle to survive are also covered.

In addition to the four featured owls, the fifteen other species of North American owls are generously depicted throughout the presentation; Bannick’s startling images reflect their shared behaviors as well as some surprising exceptions and adaptations. More than just a backdrop, the four featured owl habitats—forest, grassland and steppe, boreal, and Arctic—reveal wildly rich stories of their own.



Long-eared Owl  
photo by Paul Bannick

Owl is a stunning follow-up to Bannick’s bestselling title, *The Owl and the Woodpecker*, giving bird lovers yet another gorgeous photographic tribute, engaging natural history, and a compelling call to preserve the habitats that sustain these most iconic of birds.

Paul Bannick is an award-winning and widely published wildlife photographer specializing in the natural history of North America with a focus on birds and habitat. He has received the Canon Prize of the International Conservation Photography Awards, as well as first place in the “Birds and Their Habitat” category in Audubon magazine’s annual contest. He lives in Seattle; learn more at [www.paulbannick.com](http://www.paulbannick.com).

The free event is on December 6th at the Winthrop Barn. The evening begins at 6:00 pm with a holiday party, featuring free appetizers and drinks. The Methow Conservancy will also announce the recipients of their annual Conservation Awards. The program, “Owl: A Year in The Lives of North American Owls,” with Paul Bannick will begin at 7:00 pm. Books will be for sale before and after the program. No RSVPs are needed. Contact the Methow Conservancy at 996-2870, [mary@methowconservancy.org](mailto:mary@methowconservancy.org) if you have questions.

# Mushrooms and Their Place in the Natural World

by Molly Boyter, Wenatchee Native Plant Society

So, what are mushrooms? How do you tell one mushroom from another? Where do they live? Why are they important and what is their role in the Natural World? Most folks think of mushrooms as something good to eat. Cindy Luksus will explain that there is a whole lot more to mushrooms than their culinary aspects! Cindy's interest in mushrooms started with photography as she began capturing the unusual nature of these inhabitants of the forest ecosystem. She will share with us a presentation that will focus on the basics of mushroom ID and the role of mushrooms in the Natural World around us. This Wenatchee Native Plant Society program will be November 10 at 7:00 pm at the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center.

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## Full Moon Night Walk

from the Chelan Douglas Land Trust

Come out and see the Columbia River in another light! Join naturalist and Land Trust Conservation Fellow Susan Ballinger for a 1 ½ hour evening walk along the paved path of the Eastside Apple Capital Loop Trail on November 13. We will use all of our senses to experience the world that comes alive after most humans head indoors, even if clouds obscure the view of the full moon. Meet at the trailhead parking lot on the north side of the Odabashian Bridge, access from Sunset Highway at 37th Street NW and Empire Avenue NW. All ages are welcome. RSVP appreciated. Contact Susan Ballinger for more information. [susan@cdlandtrust.org](mailto:susan@cdlandtrust.org).

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## Environmental Film & Lecture Series: *To Make A Farm*

from the Chelan Douglas Land Trust

November 15, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm at the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center

Named one of the ten most popular Canadian films at the Vancouver International Film Festival, *To Make A Farm* asks: what might the future of local food and farming look like? This beautifully photographed documentary explores the lives of five young people who have decided to become small-scale farmers. This is an exceptionally hopeful film that gives viewers a close-range view of humanity, along with a detailed portrayal of the nuts and bolts of agriculture. Local farmers will answer questions following the film. Sponsored by The Washington Sustainable Food & Farming Network. A \$5 donation at the door is suggested.

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## Bird ID Skills Building

from the Chelan Douglas Land Trust

November 9 7:30 am to 9:45am at Walla Walla Point Park

Come along with naturalist and Land Trust Conservation Fellow Susan Ballinger on this bi-monthly outing for birders of all levels, from beginner to expert. Hone your field ID skills and learn to contribute to the online birding tool eBird, which lets you track your findings and contribute real data used by scientists to monitor bird populations around the world. Participants can come for as little as 30 minutes at a time. These trips are appropriate for all levels of birders, and take place at Walla Walla Park (meet at the north end of the park near the restrooms). No RSVP required; please contact Susan Ballinger at [susan@cdlandtrust.org](mailto:susan@cdlandtrust.org) for more information.

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## A New Column from Kenn Kaufman

Bird expert, author, environmentalist, and Audubon field editor Kenn Kaufman has a brand new bi-weekly column, *The Notebook*, featuring his original artwork and essays. In his first piece, Kenn explains how the Chestnut-sided Warbler was John James Audubon's nemesis bird. In his most recent column, Kenn explores the question: Where will wandering Fulvous Whistling-Ducks end up next? You can find this column on the National Audubon website - [www.audubon.org/section/kenn-kaufmans-notebook](http://www.audubon.org/section/kenn-kaufmans-notebook)



Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
photo by Peter Bauer

## *November Wild Phlox*

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October 30	Learn about Songbird Migration	With Don McIvor in Twisp. See <a href="http://www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com/">http://www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com/</a>
November 1	Antarctica - Nature, Ice and Life	Methow Conservancy First Tuesday in Twisp. See page 6
November 1 - 29	Weekly Science Talks	In Cashmere. See last month's Phlox
November 4	Mollusks of the Okanogan	In Tonasket. See last month's Phlox
<b>November 5</b>	<b>NCWAS Field Trip to Manson Lakes</b>	<b>With Virginia Palumbo. See page 5</b>
November 9	Bird ID Skills	With Susan Ballinger. See page 7
November 10	Learn about Forest Mushrooms	With the Native Plant Society. See page 7
November 13	Full Moon Walk	With Susan Ballinger. See page 7
November 15	A film - <i>To Make A Farm</i>	At the museum. See page 7
December 6	Paul Bannick in Winthrop	Hosted by The Methow Conservancy. See page 6
<b>December 10</b>	<b>NCWAS Early Winter Field Trip</b>	<b>With Mark Johnston. See page 5</b>



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