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Field Guide to the Future: Nearly Half of North America's Birds at Risk from Global Warming

by Jen Syrowitz, Audubon Washington

Nearly half of the bird species in the continental U.S. and Canada are threatened by global warming. Many of these species could go extinct without decisive action to protect their habitats and reduce the severity of global warming. That's the startling conclusion reached by Audubon scientists in a new study.

Of 588 bird species examined in the study, 314 are at risk. Of those, 126 species are at risk of severe declines by 2050, and a further 188 species face the same fate by 2080, with numerous extinctions possible if global warming is allowed to erase the havens birds occupy today. 313 of these at risk species regularly occur in Washington State; 92 are considered climate endangered, and 97 are climate threatened. That means that over half of birds regularly occurring here are climate endangered or threatened including the iconic Bald Eagle, the Rufous Hummingbird and even the Mallard. These species are projected to lose as much as 75% or more of their existing range in coming years, threatening their long-term survival. The study, which identifies the future projected range of Washington's climate-endangered bird species, can be accessed at wa.audubon.org.

"The greatest threat our birds face

today is global warming," said Audubon Chief Scientist Gary Langham, who led the investigation. "That's our unequivocal conclusion after seven years of painstakingly careful and thorough research. Global warming threatens the basic fabric of life on which birds – and the rest of us – depend, and we have to act quickly and decisively to avoid catastrophe for them and us."

To understand the links between where birds live and the climatic conditions that support them, Langham and other Audubon ornithologists analyzed 30 years of historical North American climate data and tens of thousands of historical bird records from the U.S. Geological Survey's North American Breeding Bird Survey and the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Understanding those links then allowed scientists to project where birds are likely to be able to survive – and not survive – in the future.

The study also reveals areas that are likely to remain stable for birds even as climate changes, enabling Audubon to identify "stronghold" areas that birds will need to survive in the future.

The result is a roadmap for bird conservation in coming decades under a warming climate. The study provides a key entry point for Audubon's

greater engagement on the urgent issue of global warming. Responding to the magnitude of the threat to our birds, Audubon is greatly expanding its climate initiative, aiming to engage a larger and more diverse set of voices in support of protecting birds.

The 25-strong Audubon chapter-network in the state and the Audubon Washington office are actively engaged in bird and habitat conservation. Some of these activities include community-science efforts to protect the sagebrush songbirds of Eastern Washington, advocacy work to safeguard food and habitat resources for marine birds, youth conservation leadership training, and advocacy concerning oil and coal transport, contributing to a brighter future for birds and people in our region.

Solutions will include personal choices to conserve energy and create backyard bird habitat, local action to create community climate action plans, state-based work to integrate Audubon's climate science into work on marine bird conservation and sagebrush steppe habitat prioritization, and other efforts to identify and protect bird habitats.

For more information, visit wa.audubon.org or audubon.climate.org.

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.



Larry Tobiska, NCWAS Treasurer, made this great image of Kent Woodruff discussing the finer points of raptor identification at the Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival last month. For more on the festival, see the article and additional photos on page 4 of this newsletter.

If you are getting the electronic version of The Wild Phlox, you can see all of our images in color!

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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.

I like living in a place with four distinct seasons. This year, I am especially happy to see fall and feel the cool air and changing colors of the landscape. Not just fall colors but also I am seeing new growth after the fire. Shrubs have sprouted from blackened stems – chokecherry, serviceberry, currant and even the volatile bitterbrush that burned so hot. Forbs are springing forth from the ground – at least two kinds of buckwheat, lupine and some Douglas sunflowers in full bloom. A variety of bunchgrasses are growing too. It all gives hope for the future. Of course, there are also noxious weeds that were stimulated by the fire's heat. I've found dalmation toadflax where I've never seen it before. Knapweed was hardly stalled at all. And whitetop is returning with a vengeance.

We have a lot of work to do to restore our landscape to something that resembles 'natural'. Already we have had new shrubs and trees planted; 120 of them with drip irrigation, mulch and wire cages. That sounds like a lot but spread over thirteen acres it's just a drop in the bucket. No doubt the shrubs will thrive and in a few years they will spread and grow berries and seeds for the birds. The trees will take longer – they are for the next generation that lives on this hill. One particularly weedy area will be sprayed. Native grass seed will be planted in the areas that burned the hottest and are not yet showing any signs of growth. So far, we have not had erosion damage from the heavy rains. That is fortunate for us.

There is not much wildlife. Mule deer numbers are way down up here – they have moved up higher or onto the valley floor. I expect the cougars won't be as big of a presence here as they were last year due to the loss of cover. That's a bit of a relief. We have not had problems with them but we also never let our dogs outside alone after dark. We made many trips out into the snowy nights last winter with our new puppy!

On page 7 there is a photo of a Great Blue Heron that landed on our hill last month. We have often seen them fly by but never stop. Many of the little critters died in the fire so I'm not sure what attracted it to this place. I think there are a lot of ground-dwelling insects. I have seen numerous robins and pipits foraging in the burned soil. The flickers are doing well since the ant colonies all seemed to have survived. Pine Siskins finally made their way back to our feeders. They have been missing all year. I keep thinking we will see more woodpeckers but with all the burned landscapes around the region they must be spread out. So far I've observed Downy, Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers foraging on our burned trees. I wonder if the White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches will return? The Pygmy Nuthatches that live in our siding are still here and I see them foraging on the snags.



Native Douglas sunflower ready to bloom from the ashes photo by Teri J Pieper

Our NCWAS email bird list-serv is very much underused these days. What are you seeing out there? Do be sure and post your interesting, unusual and everyday sightings. It might inspire someone else to get out and look around. Not yet on the NCWAS email bird list-serv? See our website for directions to sign up at www.ncwaudubon.org/birding.html or email our vice president, Art Campbell if you have any questions about it.

NCW Recent Bird Sightings

compiled from the ncwabird email list
by Teri J Pieper

A Three-toed Woodpecker was spotted on the trail to Blue Lake near Washington Pass. Surprisingly, this location is in Chelan County for you county listers out there. That same birder spotted a dark morph Ferruginous Hawk in Sagebrush Flats very near the Douglas County line. My husband saw a Great Egret in the Methow River, north of Twisp. Red-necked Grebes have been seen on the Columbia near Beebe Springs and Orondo. Other birds reported from Beebe Springs – a Lincoln Sparrow and a Merlin 'playing' with Black-billed Magpies. At Jameson Lake, There were Wilson's and Townsend's Warblers, Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets and an Osprey. The Waterville Sewage Treatment Plant had Baird's and Pectoral Sandpipers. At Douglas Creek a number of species were seen including Yellow-breasted Chat, Nashville Warbler, Virginia Rail, Townsend's Warbler,

Bewick's Wren and Red-naped Sapsucker. There are lots of American Pipits, Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-crowned Sparrows migrating throughout our four-county region. There are still a fair number of hummingbirds being reported – mostly Anna's but also at least one Calliope. I hiked to Tiffany Mountain earlier this week and saw several migrating raptors including one Golden Eagle. There were also the usual suspects like Mountain Bluebird, Clark's Nutcracker, Horned Larks and more. A hiker the day before saw a flock of 100 Sandhill Cranes! The Chelan Ridge Hawk Watch crew is reporting record-breaking numbers of raptors flying over the observation station. On the 22nd they counted 152 birds breaking the previous best one-day total by 18! Among others, they saw five Broad-winged Hawks, nine Swainson's Hawks and a dark Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk!

Another Great Hawk Migration Celebration

by Richard Scranton, Wenatchee
and Kim Bondi, Mazama

On the weekend of September 13, NCW Audubon joined the Methow Valley Ranger District and HawkWatch International to host the 5th annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival at Pateros. For the first time a Friday night workshop was added to the festival as Hawk Watch International sent Jerry Liguori, author of three raptor identification books, to present a slide show displaying his own stunning photos and videos. The helpful ID tips Jerry provided to the 70 people who attended were put to good use for those who also shuttled up to the ridge on Saturday. Mr. Liguori spent the day there helping participants identify raptors in flight.

Saturday started early with a birding field trip to Wells Wildlife Refuge led by Meredith Spencer and Virginia Palumbo. They saw about 35 bird species, including Wild Turkey, Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird, and three species of warblers.

From 8 AM to 2 PM, hourly shuttles carried participants from Memorial Park up to Chelan Ridge to watch biologists and volunteers count raptors heading south for the winter. Angela Woodside, the lead counter up on the ridge summed it up best: "What an amazing weekend! The Raptor Migration Festival was a huge success. We counted 147 migrants and banded 68. Every visitor was able to see a bird up close and personal - if not several of them. I think we all learned a thing or two (or twenty) from our guest Jerry Liguori, who was a fantastic addition to our team".

Some lucky participants saw less common species such as Broad-winged Hawk, Northern Goshawk, and Prairie Falcon. Of the many people who came to the festival this year, more than 75 traveled up to the ridge. The WSU Raptor Club and Okanogan Wildlife League arrived with raptors for display at the park including a Barn Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Western Screech Owl, American Kestrel, and Great-horned Owl. Larry and Penny Tobiska ran the owl pellet dissection kit booth and helped many children throughout the day. Jim Ulrich from Wild Birds Unlimited displayed a variety of binoculars and scopes and was



A Merlin held by Katie Bristol
at Chelan Ridge
photo by Kent Woodruff

gracious enough to loan out some bins for those in need. Trail's End Bookstore, Daniel's Birdhouses, and the North Cascades Base Camp were all kept busy throughout the day helping visitors.

Sunday, September 14 was an amazing day of sunshine, south winds, incredible views and a great group of thirty enthusiastic birders. Birders were welcomed at the North Cascades Basecamp for a pancake birding breakfast, and then they carpoled up to Harts Pass with Kent Woodruff as our raptor guide. The group casually observed 60 raptors throughout the day, including 22 Sharp-shinned Hawks, seven Merlins (one who caught and consumed a dragonfly on the wing), four Northern Goshawks, four Prairie Falcons, three Golden Eagles, two Swainson's Hawks, one Broad-winged Hawk, one Peregrine Falcon and many others... The group also observed Horned Larks, American Pipits, Common Ravens and Clark's Nutcrackers. Kent helped beginner birders by discussing "shape and behavior" as the key components for raptor identification. For our two similar-sized and shaped accipiters, the shrug-shouldered and sharp, square tail helped us remember the Sharp-shinned Hawk, while the C-shaped curve in a Coopers Hawk's tail helps distinguish it from its smaller but overlapping-sized cousin. The warm summer-like weather, a steady wind, and full visibility with no clouds on any horizon, was an ideal landscape for a day of birding. The best advice given for the day—do not identify your bird til it is far in the distance; then your birdwatching friends can't disagree with your field ID when it's gone.

We can't thank the Forest Service enough for the time, effort and funds they put into this event. Biologist Kent Woodruff worked tirelessly leading the events at the ridge and coordinating his staff of dedicated volunteers. Visitors at the ridge enjoyed his informative and entertaining explanation of raptor migration. USFS personnel had a booth in the park with a very helpful ranger, David Tobey, roaming the grounds to help answer questions from the public.

Feedback was very positive for this year's event, and I hope we see many more bird enthusiasts next year.



Great-horned Owl from WSU Raptor Club
photo by Peter Bauer

Citizen Science - Why is it Important?

by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley

One of our local Audubon members and a busy birder passed along a link to the North American Bird Conservation Initiative's (NABCI) most recent newsletter – The All-Bird Bulletin. This 28 page newsletter has many articles documenting the roles of Citizen Science and its importance to research into the lives of birds and other animals. They look at the big picture of Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys and then they look at specific examples of research including one here in Washington. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is partnering with Audubon Washington and local chapters, like NCWAS, to conduct shrub steppe songbird surveys to develop a framework for longtime monitoring of shrub steppe obligate species. Native shrub steppe

habitat is one of the most endangered habitats in our state and consequently populations of birds dependent on it are in serious decline in some locations. Other articles cover seabird conservation in California, monitoring eagles in Iowa and monitoring the Rusty Blackbird in the eastern half of the US.

What does this mean to us as birders? Keeping good records may make a difference in bird conservation. Using programs like eBird can help ongoing research. Participation in the CBC – the longest continuing Citizen Science effort in the world – is important.

To learn more about Citizen Science, see the newsletter online at www.nabci-us.org/bulletin/bulletin-fall2014.pdf.

Chelan Douglas Land Trust Events

Salmon & Naturalist Walk at Entiat Stormy Preserve

October 11, 9am-noon

Join biologist Phil Archibald for a hike along the Entiat River during salmon spawning and learn about their incredible journey from the Pacific to the Entiat. The salmon return to the Stillwaters section of this river each year and are visible from the riverbank as they spawn and guard their eggs. The hike will travel through the Land Trust's Stormy Creek Preserve and also cover the plants, birds, and wildlife that live in and use the area for shelter and forage. Join Phil and the Land Trust for this unique perspective on our natural world. Trip limited to 15. Free for Land Trust members.

Geology Walk at Mountain Home

October 18, 9am-noon
Join Kelsay Stanton for a geology hike on our Mountain Home property! Locals in Leavenworth only have to look up to know the value of the Land Trust's Mountain Home property. The property's forested hillsides, dramatic post-fire ecology, and open ridgelines provide amazing views from the valley and the dramatic views of the Icicle River Valley from atop Mountain Home Ridge show the amazing geology

and ecology of our region and remind us why this is such an important place to protect. Event participants will be emailed several days before the event with details.

Make a Difference Day: Saddle Rock Natural Area

October 25, 9:00am - 3:00pm

Come and spend Make a Difference Day outside in the (hopefully) beautiful autumn weather and help the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust work on trail construction and restoration projects at Saddle Rock Natural Area. As the City of Wenatchee and the Land Trust work to re-vamp the Natural Area, there's lots of rewarding and varied work to do. You could find yourself helping to build a fence, or installing erosion control materials, spreading native grass seed, or using hand tools to build an exciting new trail.

Visit us online for details and to sign-up for any of these volunteer projects or email Hanne Beener hanne@cdlandtrust.org.

For more information on any of these events call 667-9708 or visit the website at www.cdlandtrust.org or email info@cdlandtrust.org

Wilderness, Renewal and Communities on the Edge

by The Methow Conservancy

The Methow Conservancy sponsors a monthly "First Tuesday Lecture Series". The lectures provide a forum to learn about the Methow Valley's natural characteristics and natural resource issues. Generally "First Tuesday" Lectures are held on the first Tuesday of the month. The place varies so please check each event for the location.

November 4 "The North Cascades: Wilderness, Renewal, and Communities on the Edge," with Ana Maria Spagna, 7:00 – 8:30 pm at the Twisp River Pub. Stories about people and wild places usually take a familiar shape: a person enters a deep forest, say, or climbs a high mountain, or hikes a very long trail, and returns home to the city renewed. But not everyone returns to the city. Some people choose to settle full-time in small communities like Carlton, Twisp, Winthrop, Mazama, and Stehekin where wilderness is close enough to see and touch every day. What value does our unique perspective offer to visitors, to society, perhaps even to the ecosystem itself? What responsibilities come with living so close? Stehekin author Ana Maria Spagna will read excerpts from the new book *The North Cascades: Finding Beauty and Renewal in the Wild* from Braided River Books as well as from her own books to explore these crucial questions and spur discussion.

For more information contact Mary at 996-2870 or mary@methowconservancy.org

Armchair Birding

The Private Lives of Birds

by Anne Kilgannon
Black Hills Audubon Society

The male House Sparrow shrieks his distress from the basketball hoop that projects below the little birdhouse attached to our garage. I rush to the window to see the starling dart away from the opening. Murder and mayhem! To my, and the sparrow's, distress, this happens over and over. Eventually, the bird calms and goes about his life. I can't help wondering how I could "fix" this situation of life and death being played out in my driveway. I recognize my response as sentimental, even ironic. Both the sparrow and starling are introduced species that may well have ousted less aggressive native birds from that very box.

I return to reading *The Private Lives of Birds*, by Bridget Stutchbury, descriptively subtitled *A Scientist Reveals the Intricacies of Avian Social Life*. In her work, she sees this struggle for existence every day. She is not indifferent to bird dramas; no, she is deeply interested and keenly observant. As a bird biologist, she sees nuances and meaning in every encounter and unpacks each behavior for us, to help deepen our understanding of bird life and all that commotion outside our windows. She does this with humor, and inspires readers with her own insatiable curiosity and ingenuity in her search for answers to her own queries.

Stutchbury is a Yale-trained ornithologist who teaches biology at York University in Toronto. She is a prolific author of scientific studies; her first book for lay readers, *Silence of the Songbirds*, was published in 2009. She and her husband Gene have studied bird behavior at both ends of the migration path, in the forests and fields in the eastern United States and Canada and, following the birds southward, in Panama and other tropical sites. She takes us along on a journey through bird life-cycles, from egg to fully mature adults, describing the intimacies of courtship, nest building and defending, feeding, molting, and migration. These are all high-stakes activities, genetically-based, but environmentally controlled.

So much can go awry: competition and predation, two-timing mates and fratricide among nestlings, not to speak of environmental destruction of habitat, climate change, and other human-introduced difficulties. These are not separate issues, but entwined in complex and surprising ways. Stutchbury describes how courtship and mating are

dependent upon the quality of food resources. That shock of bright feathers and early-dawn chorus are indicators of genetic health and the particular diet enjoyed by the aspirant husbands-to-be. She gives, even to this novice birdwatcher, the keys to unlock the mysteries of bird behavior on display at our own feeders.

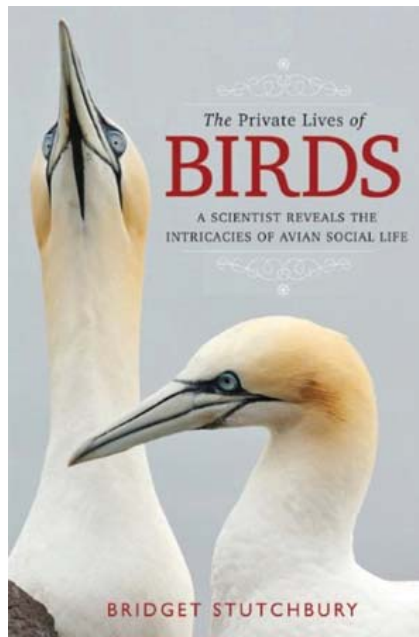
Stutchbury reveals—with real zest and wry humor—the life and adaptations of her own peculiar species, “ornithologist.” The wild adventures, mishaps, drudgery and plain hard work of gathering data and studying such elusive creatures is, however, so rewarding that she doesn't

think twice about freezing in some bird blind for hours of hopeful observation, or encountering venomous snakes, poisonous trees, or other hazards of the field.

After helping us drill down into the intricate details of bird life, Stutchbury raises the issues we, in our shorthand way, call climate change, the ultimate habitat threat. Can birds adapt to the human pace of change? Can they find mates earlier or later in the season, raise young in time to both molt and migrate within the window of survivability? Find food when the life cycles of insects and plants are disrupted and out of sync with their own needs? Can we lessen our grip on the earth enough to spare room for Savannah Sparrows? Can we slow and reverse our headlong dash to disaster? Books like *The Private Lives of Birds* help give us both the big picture and

the exacting science, bird by bird, of what we need to know and take to heart to appreciate and save the birds we love.

editor's note - this book review is reprinted with permission from the Black Hills (Olympia WA area) Audubon Society newsletter, The Echo.



Volunteers needed!

Wenatchee River Institute invites you to help with our Youth Education Field Day Program. With boots in the mud, hands in the dirt, bugs in the hand, eyes to the sky, help bring our beautiful world into focus for a child. No special experience necessary; we'll train you! Many dates in October are available; please visit www.wenatcheeriverinstitute.org for more information. Questions? Contact Deandra at dearly@wenatcheeriverinstitute.org or call 548-9362.

Fall 'To Do' List From Your Backyard Wildlife Family

From WDFW's *Crossing Paths* newsletter

Your family may be making those fall outdoor chore lists, as daylight hours shrink, temperatures drop, and the urge grows to “batten down the hatches” in the yard and garden. Here’s another ‘to do’ list from your local wildlife family that you may find easier to check off:

- Leave some “dead heads” on your flowering plants to provide seeds for some of us birds and other animals
- If you must rake leaves off grass lawns, just pile them under some shrubs, bushes or other nooks and crannies to provide homes for those insects that we birds love to eat; leaves make great mulch to help your plants, anyway!
- Keep that dead or dying tree right where it is (unless, of course, it’s truly a hazard to you), so we can feast on the insects in the rotting wood or make winter roosts or dens in its cavities
- Give yourself and your mower a rest for at least a portion of your lawn so we’ve got a patch of taller grass to hide and forage in

- Save just a little of that dead bramble thicket for us - it makes great winter cover and we don’t need much! Fall is a good time to plant shrubs, so replace invasive, exotic Himalayan and cutleaf blackberries with native plants of higher wildlife value like blackcap (native black raspberry) or red raspberry; native currants or gooseberries found in your area; or native roses such as Nootka or baldhip.
 - Pile up any brush or rocks you clear around your place to give us another option for nests and dens
 - Take it easy on yourself and let go of the “perfect” garden image; we wild animals like less tidy, “fuzzy” places because there’s usually more food and shelter there
 - Get yourself a comfortable chair, sit back, and congratulate yourself on having made a home for wildlife and a haven of relaxation for yourself!
- editor’s note - other native plants to consider for our eastern Washington region might include serviceberry, mountain ash, elderberry, chokecherry, and snowberry among others.*

Notes from Mazama

By Bob Spiwak, Mazama

It’s September 17th, on the verge of the autumn equinox. A day of welcome clouds and possible, even more welcome, rain, as there are still fires being quashed up here in mid Washington. We were never under any real threat, the nearest flames and smoke about two miles away, drooling downhill slowly and immediately attacked by helicopters.

Bird life is pretty quiet around here. We had a lone mallard hen on the pond for a short while yesterday, but the sight of our new dog flushed her. Considering the paucity of most birdlife, especially the ducks, she probably has missed her connection on the Southland Express.

But yesterday did bring an avian surprise. Well, sort of. We were sitting on the deck over the pond when our new hound, whom we’ve had for about three months suddenly erupted from the deck and flashed to the old golf course. She is a keltie whose forbears seem to be those of a heeler and Australian cattle dog. Fantastic nose and hearing abilities and when she flashed away, we hurriedly followed.

About a hundred yards from where we had been sitting, three Wild Turkeys were still muddling around in the grass as the dog sat and barked. With our arrival she must have decided she should be working and took off toward the gobblers. They took flight immediately, one of the trio headed west in a dead-reckoning navigation, the other two went upward and into a pair of cottonwood trees and lit about sixty feet off the ground.

The dog may have still been in pursuit of the first one as Ms. Gloria and I both searched the trees for the other two. We never did spot them, so well were they camouflaged among the leaves and branches.

It is quite possible that these birds are offspring of a flock of 21 that my part-time neighbor raised from day-old chicks some time ago. Being part-time and a very close friend, you can guess who became the de-facto turkey herder in neighbor’s long absences. But that’s a whole ‘nuther story and we’ll save it for Thanksgiving.



A Great Blue Heron surveys a burned hillside in the Methow Valley
photo by Teri J Pieper

October Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar
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October 7	Expeditionary Art Imaging the Arctic	Methow Conservancy First Tuesday at the Confluence Gallery 7:00 pm. See www.methowconservancy.org
October 11	Salmon and Naturalist Walk	Along the Entiat River with the Chelan Douglas Land Trust. See page 5.
October 18	Geology at Mountain Home	In Leavenworth with the Chelan Douglas Land Trust. See page 5.
October 25	Make a Difference Day	At Saddle Rock with the Chelan Douglas Land Trust. See page 5.
November 4	Wilderness Renewal and Communities on the Edge	Methow Conservancy First Tuesday at the Twisp River Pub. See page 5 or www.methowconservancy.org .



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