



Volume 49 #2 October 2015

## Raptor Migration Festival Recap

by Richard Scranton

On the weekend of September 12th, NCW Audubon, the US Forest Service's Methow Valley and Entiat/Chelan Ranger Districts and HawkWatch International hosted the sixth annual Hawk Migration Festival. Due to wildfires, the festival was located at the North Cascades Base Camp in Mazama and included a Friday night workshop and two field trips to Slate Peak to view migrating raptors.

Dave Oleyar, senior scientist with HawkWatch International was there to help with all aspects of this event. Dave presented a slide show to more than 45 hawk watchers on Friday night, discussing migration strategies and methods to learn raptor identification.

Forest Service biologists Jesse McCarty and Kent Woodruff joined Dave to lead the field trips to Slate Peak. They helped with ID and talked of bird migration strategies, explaining the process of running a count and banding station in the high country. The official banding and counting operations recently returned to Chelan Ridge, though due to the fires, visitors aren't allowed to visit at this time (see related story on page 5). This is Jesse's first year with the Chelan Ridge HawkWatch site following in the footsteps of Kent, whose tenure with the program ran for seventeen years.

On Saturday, 25 of us carpoled to 7400'

Slate Peak about three miles past Harts Pass. We were worried about parking at the gate because we knew that this weekend was the start of high country hunting and there was a wedding happening at the peak. Luckily, we avoided both events and were blessed with 70 degree weather and manageable winds.



Hawk Watchers on Sunday  
photo by Kim Bondi, Mazama

The birds were cooperating as well. I'm not sure of the total numbers (around forty) as we separated into two groups, but we saw at least two Golden Eagles; several Merlins, Prairie Falcons, Red-tailed, Sharp-shinned and Coopers Hawks; and at least one American Kestrel and Northern Goshawk.

On our return trip we paused at a pit stop near Harts Pass and ran into the bride-to-be. She was happy to see us, especially since we were leaving, and we wished her the best. We offered to give her a

pair of binoculars so she could keep track of the remaining birds up there, but oddly, she declined. Then a couple miles further down the road we ran into a pack train of horses and mules on their way up, presumably for the high hunt.

Sunday was a different story as the weather became much colder and the winds increased. About fifteen

sturdy souls participated but the conditions were not conducive for good hawk watching. We did see Prairie Falcons, Red-tailed, Sharp-shinned and Coopers Hawks, but not in very large numbers.

The North Cascades Base Camp treated us very well. Many people coming for the festival stayed at their facility and enjoyed the hospitality. Due to the late shift in venue, we didn't have time

to put together events with live birds or interactive booths. Jim Ulrich with Wild Birds Unlimited did come for the sixth consecutive year and many of us enjoyed perusing his displays of new optics.

Next year we plan to be back at Pateros providing shuttles up to Chelan Ridge, a field trip or two, and all the usual fun activities for kids and grownups alike in Memorial Park. Feedback was very positive for this year's event, and we look forward to seeing many more bird enthusiasts next year.

The mission of the  
**North Central Washington Audubon Society**  
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 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.*



This Common Raven flew over Slate Peak on Saturday the 12th after the Hawk Migration field trip and just before the wedding mentioned in the article on page one. It has white spots on its belly and I wonder if that makes it partially leucistic?  
 photo by Teri J Pieper

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Cooler temperatures and some rain have brought much-needed relief to north central Washington in recent weeks. After the hot, fiery summer, it feels good to pull on the sweaters and wool socks! Migration is in full swing and once again I am hearing lots of birds calling back and forth from burned stems around our house. They are mostly White-crowned Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers and a variety of finches including Cassin's, House and also Pine Siskins.

There are no hummingbirds coming to our feeders now. Generally they are here well into October and once even into November. At this time of year they are mostly Anna's and I have not seen any Anna's at all.

If you are feeding birds, remember to put out water for them too. It's been such a dry year and water is at a premium everywhere. The sparrows and finches and even bluebirds really do enjoy our small water feature.

On the Columbia, the water level was dropped pretty significantly between Wells and Chief Jo Dams. I thought that would make a good opportunity for shorebird observations and stopped at the Starr boat launch. I saw a couple of Killdeer and that was it. There were lots of Mallards, a couple of Great Blue Herons and three Bald Eagles of varying ages. Also a Common Loon and a few Canada Geese.

Here are two grouse images I made in the last couple of weeks. I followed the young male around our house for a few minutes one day as he explored and tried to figure out where he was and what he was doing. At one point he peered in through a sliding glass door and scared himself when he realized there was someone inside.

The other grouse, a female, was seen at the Blue Lake Trailhead between Washington and Rainy Passes on highway 20. She had three youngsters with her. They had some flight feathers but no tail feathers yet. They seemed awfully small for so late in the season, August 30th. Hunting season for forest grouse starts on September 1st. If a hunter took that momma grouse, those young birds probably would not survive. Trying to determine the species – Sooty or Dusky – I looked at my Sibley app and was not helped when it said for females of both species: 'gray-brown and speckled overall' and showed identical images. Based on location I guessed Sooty. I have seen a Sooty male on the trail some years before and I've heard it said that the geographical dividing line for these species in this region is somewhere east of Washington Pass.



Young Dusky Grouse male  
photo by Teri J Pieper



Sooty Grouse female  
photo by Teri J Pieper

## NCW Recent Bird Sightings

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

There were not too many bird sightings reported in recent months. I wonder if folks are not birding or not seeing anything interesting or they are not reporting to the email bird lists anymore?

Pine Siskins were on the move at the beginning of September. Large flocks were seen in migration in and around the Methow Valley. A Northern Pygmy Owl was seen under a bridge on the Cutthroat Pass trail. American Pipits were reported on a lawn near the Columbia. Peregrine Falcons and Golden Eagles have been seen on cliffs along Highway 97A. A Peregrine Falcon was seen and photographed near the Brewster Bridge. According to Heather Findlay, a number of expected birds have NOT been seen in Okanogan County this year. If you have seen these birds in this county, please let her know. They are: Great Egret, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Barn Owl, Snowy Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Long-eared Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, Sagebrush Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and White-winged Crossbill.



# Fodder From the Feeder

by Karen Mulcahy, Winthrop

First I must say that this is a tale from very different feeders than the ones in my front yard. These feeders are in a magical little place known locally as Heumbo, north of Chachapoyas, in northern Peru. We went to this area in May to visit the famed Gocta Falls (fifth highest in the world) and the ruins at Kuelap, both definitely off the beaten tourist track.

We had another mission to complete as well. We had learned of the plight of the Marvelous Spatuletail Hummingbird indigenous to the Utcubamba Valley. Only about 1000 pairs remain in the world. These gorgeous hummers have been hunted to near extinction because their little hearts are the ultimate aphrodisiac. And of course, their habitat is also being destroyed due to, yep, you guessed it, deforestation and agricultural expansion. Naturally, we had to try to see this little guy; we were in the area after all.

Let me tell you that being in the area is NOT an easy task! It involves taking a bus from Cajamarca on what used to be called the scariest highway in the world; they have paved the entire route now, but it is still SCARY. At one point, due to recent slides, we all had to exit the bus, walk for a ways on the one lane highway while the drivers helped clear the slide area enough for the bus to continue the journey. That whole road trip is another tale.

Our friends from Chile that we met in Chachapoyas (they had taken the bus so we bonded) joined us in hiring a taxi for the day and we motored up to Heumbo, about 60-70 kilometers to the north. All of this area is lush cloud forest. There were many bromeliads and other vegetation we weren't familiar with and always new birds to see. This is amazing mountainous country located between 2000 and 3000 meters elevation.



Marvelous Spatuletail hummingbird photo by Rick Rottman

We arrived mid-morning at the Marvelous Spatuletail Interpretation center - a twelve hectare site maintained almost singlehandedly by a man named Santos! His name is apt. He is the Marvelous Spatuletail's patron saint. The site is a spatuletail lek (leks are gatherings of males for the purposes of competitive mating display) that overlooks a valley below and has rustic overnight lodging as well. This was Santos' land and in 2000 he met birders who were trying to find the Marvelous Spatuletail hummingbird and he led them to this place. The preserve has been developed since then. Google Santos Montenegro - the spatuletail guy to learn more. It's quite a story. Santos personally took us to all the feeder areas

(we were the only guests there) and we sat on benches near the feeders and just watched hummers buzz about for a couple of hours. We saw a total of ten different hummingbird species. Santos identified them all for us. I certainly couldn't have! You could tell this was his life's passion and we were thrilled to have the perfect guide. He told us there were three breeding spatuletail pairs in the area at the time and he kept people well away from them. Back at the center, he showed us videos and more information on the spatuletail and the flora and fauna of the area. And naturally, I bought a T-shirt to support the cause!

And yes, we did see the most Marvelous Spatuletail! And the Green Violetear, Sparkling Violetear, White-bellied Hummingbird, Andean Emerald, Violet-fronted Brilliant, Bronzy Inca, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Little Woodstar, and White-bellied Woodstar. I am sure there

were more, but I couldn't keep them straight. Thank heavens for my husband's camera expertise so we could view them all later. It was a magical day. Of the almost 1900 species of birds in Peru, seeing this one up close and personal was a rare treat.

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## Learn About Washington's Natural Areas Program

by Don Schaechtel, Wenatchee

The Wenatchee Valley Chapter of the Native Plant Society will present a program on the Washington Natural Areas Program – *Conserving Washington's Native Species and Ecosystems*. This program will be at the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center, 127 South Mission Street in Wenatchee on Thursday, October 8 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources conserves nearly 152,000 acres of lands in designated natural area preserves

and natural resources conservation areas - providing opportunities for research, environmental education and recreation. Keyna Bugner, Assistant Ecologist for the DNR, will give an overview of the Natural Areas program in WA and discuss the features of some of our local natural areas. Learn more about the natural areas around the Wenatchee Valley and ongoing research and restoration projects at these sites. Find out how you can help protect these areas for future generations!

# Hawk Watch Returns to Chelan Ridge

by Kent Woodruff, Wildlife Biologist  
USFS Methow Valley Ranger District

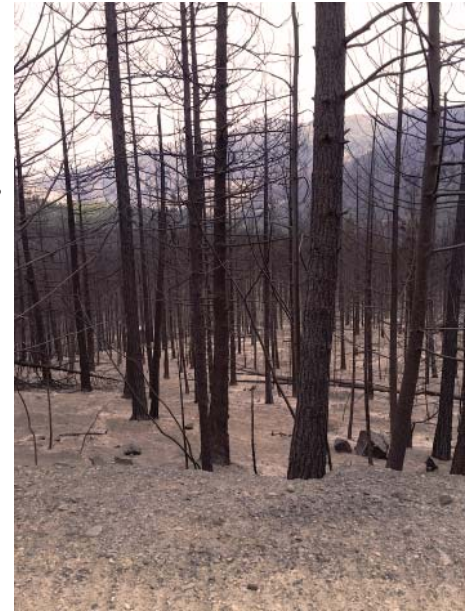
We got off to a very bumpy start for the 19th year of the Chelan Ridge project due to fire storms. However, it has been wonderful to receive very positive support from many quarters. We initiated a count effort at Slate Peak, but with cooler weather and a little precipitation, we have been allowed to return to the Chelan Ridge station near Cooper Mountain.

Jesse McCarty is doing an amazing job as project coordinator in this, his first year, while trying to recover personal fire losses around his home and act as fire Resource Advisor for the Chelan District. We have a very strong crew, three interns, and even a recent visit from HawkWatch International Science Director, Dave Oleyar who drove all the way from the HawkWatch head shed in Utah!



First Merlin of the season at Chelan Ridge.  
photo by Kelsey Navarre

Hawks are flying; the weather pattern is showing signs of returning to historical norms; fall leaves are turning yellow in the hills. We hope to be able to welcome public visitors soon. Check with the Chelan District front desk at 682-2576 for access details as they may change.



Burned trees on the way to Chelan Ridge.  
photo by Kent Woodruff

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## WDFW Seeks Input on Status of Snowy Plovers and Northern Spotted Owls

State wildlife managers are seeking public comment on draft status reviews that recommend keeping Snowy Plovers and Northern Spotted Owls on the state endangered species list. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) periodically reviews the status of protected species in the state. The public can comment through December 8 on the listing recommendations and recently updated status reports for the Snowy Plover and the Northern Spotted Owl.

The draft review on the Snowy Plover is available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01751/>, while the draft review for the northern spotted owl can be found online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01752/>. Written comments on the reviews and recommendations can be submitted via email to [TandEpubliccom@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:TandEpubliccom@dfw.wa.gov) or by mail to Gerald Hayes, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, 600 Capitol Way N., Olympia, WA 98501-1091.

The Snowy Plover is a small bird with gray wings and a white breast that lives mostly in coastal areas of Washington. In 1993, the state listed Snowy Plovers as endangered and the federal government listed the species as threatened. Although the Snowy Plover

from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife population appears to be increasing on the west coast, the population in Washington is still small. Factors affecting Snowy Plovers in Washington include habitat decline, human disturbance during nesting season, and low productivity due to predation on eggs and chicks. Efforts are ongoing to improve snowy plover habitat and reduce disruptions during nesting season.



Spotted Owl  
photo by Ken Bevis

The Northern Spotted Owl was listed as an endangered species in Washington in 1988. This species is found in mature and old coniferous forest from coastal areas to the eastern slopes of the Cascade Range. At the time of listing, the most important factor influencing the Northern Spotted Owl was loss of habitat, primarily due to timber harvest. In recent years, the closely related Barred Owl, which out-competes the Northern Spotted Owl for resources, has expanded its range and is contributing to the continued population decline of Northern Spotted Owls in Washington. A variety of management actions are underway to protect Northern Spotted Owls in Washington and elsewhere within their range, including an attempt to remove Barred Owls from Northern Spotted Owl territories at four study areas across the Pacific Northwest.



# Twisp Ponds Provides a Place to Walk, Reflect, Paint, and Explore!

by Ashley Lodato, staff writer for Methow Arts  
Reprinted with permission from the Twisp, WA blog  
<http://twispwa.blogspot.com/>

There are few better places to spend a sunny autumn afternoon than at the Twisp Ponds.

Located just a half mile out of Twisp on Twisp River Road, the Twisp Ponds site is a complex of streams, rearing ponds, meandering trails, public art, and interpretive stations that serves the dual purpose of education and support for populations of steelhead trout, spring Chinook salmon, and coho salmon. It's a working restoration site, yes, but it's one that is open to the public (as well as dogs!). With some sections of trail lined with willow, mock orange, and rose, and other areas passing through majestic black cottonwood stands, the Twisp Ponds provides a place for a lovely afternoon stroll, a scenic spot to sit and paint or write, and a wild-feeling site for children to explore.

The Twisp Ponds weren't always such a lush refuge, however. At one point the property was slated for residential development. But between 2001 and 2007 Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation purchased nine separate parcels from four landowners and in 2002 began riparian planting and other restoration projects, as well as constructing an open-air interpretive center to use for educational programs. Four more properties were added between 2007 and 2009, bringing the site's size to 37 acres.

Rob Crandall, who has spearheaded most of the restoration projects at the Twisp Ponds on behalf of the Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation (MSRF), points at red osier dogwood and quaking aspen near the stream banks. "Those were planted about ten years ago by students," he says, "and now I'm actually having to trim things back to keep the trails clear." It's a sign that the restoration efforts have paid off. "We're in the jungle stage," says Crandall, "which is an indicator of our success."

The vision for the Twisp Ponds has always been one that integrated education and outreach efforts with the actual restoration work at the site. MSRF Executive Director Chris Johnson has long been a proponent of partnerships,

and sees the public as a partner in the Twisp Ponds. "Chris felt like in order for the project to succeed," says Crandall, "there needed to be community buy-in." Crandall explains that as residents and visitors tour the site, see changes over time, and enjoy the trail system, they will support the project's restoration goals.

Outreach efforts at the site begin early, with the Twisp Ponds providing an outdoor classroom for students from the Methow Valley and from around Okanogan County to learn aquatic ecology, natural history, species identification and life histories, hydrology, and water quality through Watershed Watchers, an environmental education program that integrates a science curriculum with art activities such as botanical drawing and storytelling.

Students get structured sessions with naturalists and teaching artists, but the Twisp Ponds can be enjoyed just as readily on a self-guided tour. Grab a guidebook from

the kiosk, wander across the first stream, and follow the 1-mile looping trail in either direction; both paths will take you across bridges, through cottonwood groves, and past three public art pieces—Bruce Morrison's "Father Flood" carving, Cordelia Bradburn's "Blue Heron and Smolt" cast aluminum heron in the water, and Steve Love's cast aluminum "Twisp." A fourth piece,

Dan Brown's rusted steel "Bringing Home the Bacon-Salmon," marks the entrance to the Twisp Ponds from the road.

Native grasses whisper in the wind. Songbirds warble to each other from the dappled light of cottonwoods. Rose hips seem to glow in the mid-day sun. The splash of a beaver tail prompts frogs to croak from the riverbank. A kingfisher swoops over the water. A skim of snow on distant peaks hints of winter's imminence, but for now the Twisp Ponds are an oasis of golden light and sparkling water, an ecosystem perfectly in balance.

Artwork at the Ponds was provided through a partnership with Methow Arts Alliance and MSRF.



Fall at Twisp Ponds  
photo by Teri J Pieper

# WDFW Invites Public to Help Identify Conservation and Recreation Priorities

OLYMPIA – State fish and wildlife leaders are asking people to share their views on the values and priorities that should drive the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) over the next several years.

The opportunity is part of WDFW's new multi-year initiative, "Washington's Wild Future: A Partnership for Fish and Wildlife," which is an effort to strengthen the department's relationships with communities, increase support for conservation and outdoor recreation, and help ensure WDFW programs and services meet the public's needs.

People can talk with WDFW managers at six regional forums in September and October. Comments will also be accepted through Oct. 31 on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildfuture/> and by email to [WildFuture@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:WildFuture@dfw.wa.gov). People may also participate in the conversation through the WDFW Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonFishWildlife>.

Public comments and proposals will help determine priorities for conserving and managing Washington's fish and wildlife in the coming years, said WDFW Director Jim Unsworth, who was hired to

lead the agency in January.

"Since I joined WDFW, I have been asking people, 'If you could tell the director of Fish and Wildlife one thing, what would you say?'" Unsworth said. "This is a great opportunity for people across the state to do just that. I want to hear about what we are doing right, where we need to improve, and where we should focus our efforts and our funding over the next five to 10 to 20 years."

Unsworth, senior WDFW managers, and regional staff are scheduled to attend the meetings, where people can discuss fishing and hunting and other outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as habitat protection and restoration, licensing, enforcement, and other fish and wildlife management issues.

The meetings are scheduled for 6 to 8 p.m. at the following dates and locations in our region:

- Sept. 30 – Center Place, 2426 N. Discovery Place, Spokane Valley.
- Oct. 20 – Port of Chelan County Confluence Technology Center, 285 Technology Center Way, Wenatchee.

Each meeting will include a brief presentation from a WDFW regional

from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

director about the importance of fish and wildlife management to Washington's quality of life and the economies of local communities throughout the state. Participants will then be invited to talk in small groups with representatives of the department's Fish, Wildlife, Enforcement, Licensing, and Habitat programs, as well as Unsworth and his staff.

Later this year, WDFW will summarize the comments and suggestions from the public, as well as input from outdoor organizations, advisory groups, tribes, and state and local elected officials. The information will be used to help identify potential changes in WDFW's operations and services, and to develop future policy, budget and fee proposals.

"We face major management challenges over the next several years, and for us to be successful we need the public's support and assistance," Unsworth said. "That can only happen if the department has strong relationships with anglers, hunters, outdoor recreation groups, and others interested in fish and wildlife in Washington."

More information about WDFW is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov>.

## October Walks with CDLT

by Hillary Schwirtlich, Wenatchee

The Chelan Douglas Land Trust has some opportunities to get out and explore and learn about the cherished lands that they help protect.

October 2 – Salmon and Naturalist Walk at Stormy Creek Preserve – Join retired biologist Phil Archibald to experience fall salmon spawning in the Entiat.

October 9 – Geology Hike at Mountain Home Preserve – Join geologist Kelsay Stanton to learn about the Leavenworth area's fascinating geologic history.

October 17 – Wildfire and Restoration at in the Wenatchee Foothills – Join biologist Andrea Barbknecht to learn about the ecology of this summer's wildfires and the ongoing restoration work.

For more information, contact Hillary Schwirtlich, Membership Coordinator at 667-9708 or [Hillary@cdlandtrust.org](mailto:Hillary@cdlandtrust.org) or see [www.cdlandtrust.org/whats-new](http://www.cdlandtrust.org/whats-new)



A Great Egret has been observed along the Columbia in Wenatchee recently. Here the bird is seen flying over the swimming area at Walla Walla Point Park.

Photo by John Barta, Wenatchee

**October Wild Phlox**

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**North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar**  
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October 2	Salmon and Naturalist Walk at Stormy Creek	CDLT nature walk. See page 7
October 8	Learn about Washington's Natural Area Preserves	Native Plant Society. See page 4
October 9	Geology Hike at Mountain Home	CDLT nature walk. See page 7
October 13-19	The Art of Nature Journaling	Create your own beautiful journals with Heather Wallis Murphy at the Icicle Creek Center. See last month's Phlox
October 17	Wildfire and Restoration in the Wenatchee Foothill	CDLT program. See page 7
December 14 - January 5	Christmas Bird Count Season	Be sure and read your Wild Phlox to find a count near you!



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