



artwork by Steven D'Amato

## Pen, Notebook, Camera and Binoculars

Volume 51 #2 October 2017

by Mary Willard Gallagher, Leavenworth

I have all the above. As I open the passenger door, bird trills and songs fill my ears. Yes, this is a good day to be out birding. June 24th, the first official Saturday of Summer. I am on a NCWAS field trip to Blewett Pass and Table Mountain led by expert birder by ear, Mark Johnston. I feel comfortable using my eyes but I want to improve my birding by ear.

“Chipping Sparrow, can you hear that ‘dry’ trill, like a flat rattle?” instructs Mark as he sets up his scope. He continues, “There, that is a Hermit Thrush, listen to the clear, very clean melody. It begins with a single clear INTRODUCTORY note.”

Yes, I will learn a lot today. “Hermit Thrush, Western Tanager, and a Townsend’s Warbler. The warbler sounds very ‘buzzy.’ Do you hear that? When you hear what sounds like a Hermit Thrush, but without an

introductory note, that is a Swainson’s Thrush,” he adds. Does Mark ever breathe? I am trying to breathe, write, look, walk, take pictures and listen. Listen for an “introductory note.”

“The Chipping Sparrows are really vocal today,” Mark points out. I thought I was listening to a Dark-eyed Junco. Yes, this is why I am here today. Mark continues, “Birds who visually are very dissimilar can have voices that are almost identical.”

I give up writing and lift my binoculars to focus on the rufous-capped bird trilling his heart out. Magnified, the Chipping Sparrow is splendid. I see his beak open and try to wish my brain to hold onto that memory, visually and audibly.

“This may be the best look of the day!” proclaims Mark, “notice how incessantly he’s singing. Perhaps he is still looking for a mate. Males that aren’t already

attached typically sing more.”

“Spotted Towhee call,” I say with a smile. I recognize a voice. Mark interjects as he lifts his binoculars, “Hermit Thrush.”

I follow his example and lift my binoculars up. Sure enough, on a nurse log, out in plain sight, the typically secretive Hermit Thrush is perched and calling. I quickly scribble “Birds who visually are very dissimilar can have voices that are almost identical.”

Pen, notebook, camera and binoculars. I haven’t left anything behind. As I close the passenger door the bird songs and trills fade from my ears. I realize that birding by ear, like any form of study, takes practice. I am eager for the next stop.

*The poem on page 2 and article about eBird on page 4 were from this same field trip. Get Inspired. Go out in Nature!*

## The Art of Birding By Ear

by Mark Johnston, Leavenworth

I must say I find few things more satisfying than helping provide rewarding field experiences to our membership. The more we appreciate and understand about the birds that enrich our lives and communities, the more effective we’ll be as individuals and an organization in support of them.

Birds have vocal repertoires. Each individual bird has a set of arrows (song types) in its quiver. Each song type is structured a bit differently, but they still fit within the basic modus operandi (m.o.) of the species. What’s important to understand, is that any specific bird in the field may be singing a song different in detail from what you may have heard on a cd or app. The art is in

understanding this, and learning how to fit what you’re hearing into the basic structure for a given species. There are also certain species that can cross into the m.o. of other very similar sounding ones. A good example is the Chipping Sparrow who gives a long, dry, flat trill. However, his voice could be easily confused with a Dark-eyed Junco’s voice. Some of their trills are given on pitches or paces that overlap some Chipping Sparrow songs. Spotted Towhee songs can overlap some Dark-eyed Junco ones. The important point is that birding by ear isn’t a cookie cutter thing. You need to let go of that idea. Doing so will put you into the real world of bird vocalizations, and thereby make your learning easier.

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.*

**Seeing Naneum Meadow**

In Cascade foothills in June  
 across Naneum Meadow  
 in a stand of trees scorched  
 by the wild fires of a past season,  
 armed with binoculars and cameras  
 we stalk the black-backed woodpecker.

From the road nearby, the meadow  
 looks like a solid blanket  
 of lush green grass, but walking across it  
 we see there's more:  
 a crazy quilt of flowers,  
 tiny violets, yellow buttercups,  
 pink asters and shooting stars,  
 blue Jacob's ladders reaching for heaven  
 from the meadow floor.

The black-back eluded us  
 But surprise! Flushed,  
 a spotted sandpiper  
 rises from the creek bed  
 to draw our eyes another way.

Susan Rae Sampson

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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)

What was the highlight of your summer? Most of my summer memories this year are cloaked with heat and wildfire smoke. We did get out of town for five days to Lopez Island. It seems like it should have been a birdy place to be and such a different habitat and climate from home. However, the bird highlight for me was watching crows enjoying our dogs' water dish. They drank from it and bathed in it and waded in it, leaving lots of black crow dirt. I think fresh water is in short supply on the tiny island and they were just taking advantage of the situation. They were very bold about it too, not minding that we were just



Great Blue Heron at Pearrygin Lake  
photo by Janet Bauer, Winthrop

about ten feet away. I did enjoy good views of Black Oystercatchers and Great Blue Herons at sunset. There were seals and sea lions and river otters in the saltwater. In my kayak one evening, I heard loud breathing behind and turned around to see a large harbor seal's head out of the water and closely watching me. I wondered if he thought I might somehow provide dinner. Then he slipped into the water and I saw him swim under my boat in the clear water before disappearing. Ken caught one of those escaped Atlantic salmon, doing his good turn for the Salish Sea and bringing home some good fish for the smoker.

Other than that, it just seemed so dreary with air that was often hazardous to breathe. We closed the doors and stayed inside for days on end. The dogs were confused. The garden became overrun with weeds and voles. Few hummingbirds stuck with us through the summer, although a few still linger into the fall season. The feeders will come down soon to get them to migrate before it's really cold.

We also had to give up bird banding due to the smoke. If it is hazardous to us, just imagine what kind of stress that would put on a tiny bird. Today was our first day back at the banding station and we were fortunate to get half a dozen Ruby-crowned Kinglets and six Black-capped Chickadees, an Orange-crowned Warbler and a few others. Julie Hovis, the coordinator, is looking for a few more volunteers for next year's banding. You can reach her at jahovis711@gmail.com.

Did you miss the Hawk Migration Festival? Don't worry. The HawkWatch crew should be at Chelan Ridge until the third week in October unless snow comes early. They welcome visitors and will help you learn to identify raptors on the wing and perhaps you will get a chance to see a banded bird and help release it.



Orange-crowned Warbler  
photo by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley



Juvenile Gyr Falcon from Chelan Ridge  
photo provided by the Chelan Ridge  
HawkWatch team

## NCW Recent Bird Sightings

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

Aside from the reports from Chelan Ridge, I don't see too many bird sightings for our four-county region this past month. One of the most interesting was a Northern Parula reported by one birder, in riparian habitat near the Orondo school in Douglas County. This interesting warbler lives in the eastern half of the US and is seldom seen in the west. Sandhill Cranes have returned to Okanogan County and have been seen on the Cameron Lake Road and near Twisp. White-crowned Sparrows are abundant in migration right now. Migrating raptors can be seen most anywhere. There are reports of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks near Chelan and in the Methow Valley. I've seen a Peregrine Falcon twice on our hill. A late Wood Duck was seen on the Beaver Pond below Sun Mountain Lodge near Winthrop. And just yesterday, September 25, my husband saw a Scrub Jay in our yard. Watch this space for photos next month.

# Fodder from the Feeder

## So Many Questions - Citizen Science Might Provide an Answer By Karen Mulcahy, Winthrop

Fall is upon us, and with early morning temperatures in the thirties there is a chill in the air. We are harvesting the last of the garden's bounty. It is still smoky in the valley and fall migration is in full swing despite what nature throws at the birds. It is fun to see them vying for spots at the various bird baths in the garden. The Yellow-rumped Warblers zip around with the Mountain Chickadees, all three nuthatches wait their turns, and many sparrows have returned. The White-crowned Sparrows are abundant, as are the Dark-eyed Juncos. Some of these birds will stick around all winter, but many will carry on their long journeys. I got a fleeting glimpse of a Nashville Warbler and two days in a row we saw a Red-naped Sapsucker, no doubt migrating through and looking for treats on our curly willow.

I wonder if migration is affected by the fires and lingering smoke in the NW? The non-migrant bird populations of all the areas on fire must have shifted somewhat. In our Twin Lakes neighborhood, we have heard and observed more Great Horned Owls than usual. One early morning walk, we heard at least four calling and saw two together on a ponderosa pine not far from the road (wish we had the camera). I was unable to attend the Hawk Migration Festival and I wonder if there are changes at Chelan Ridge due to the smoke? And then, what of the horrible storms they will encounter in the east? How can birds possibly survive all this?

Many birds are just short or medium distance migrants and their destinations vary as food sources change. But for the 350 species that embark on long distance journeys, their routes are more complex and predictable as they have evolved over many years and are at least partially in the

birds' genetics at this point. Weather and food sources play a big part of course. And fire affects food. And fires will most likely be burning each summer in greater abundance due to so many factors - increased fuel sources, disease, increased temperatures due to climate change. The agencies that manage our forests will likely continue to pursue the course of less suppression to help our forests return to their more natural state. How will this affect bird migration and bird populations in general? Will the migrating populations experience increased mortality due to unavailability of food and habitat along the way? They already face so many threats - loss of habitat in their migrating pathways due to human populations and growth, tall building lights and communication towers, increasing super storms due to climate change.

Enter the vital role of citizen science. eBird utilizes professional and recreational birder data and has a wonderful website - ebird.org - that is chock full of birding info. I am sure many readers have checked it out. A fascinating little section (scroll down the right hand side to News and Features) is called Occurrence Maps. There you can select a particular bird and view a map that shows its occurrence in the USA week by week over the year. For instance, you can see when the Western Meadowlark leaves our area. That list used data collected from various counts at 130,000 unique locations to predict the occurrence of 57 species for each week of the year.

It will be interesting to see if this gets updated and changed as our climate and world changes. They welcome your input (read the "About" section) and I for one need to get better at submitting info to them. Give it a try.

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## Using eBird in the Field

by Jane Zanol, Wenatchee

I attended Mark Johnston's Birding By Ear field trip on June 24. One of my goals was to see if I could successfully enter data into my eBird app without it distracting me from my task of learning to identify birds by ear. The app was easy to use, and the birds were not so numerous that I was constantly on my phone. The places we birded were easy to identify from Nearby Hotspots on the app: Blewett Pass Discovery Trail, Diamond Head (Upper Tronson Road), then Naneum Meadow. For the day, I gave up my usual habit of writing notes and sketching in my nature journal so I could focus on entering data in the field and contribute to Citizen Science. Here is the submitted report:

Naneum Meadow, Kittitas County, Washington, US Sat Jun 24, 2017 11:59 AM Party Size: 6, Duration: 2 hour(s), 26 minute(s) Distance: 2.0 mile(s) Submitted from eBird for iOS, version 1.5.140 21 species total	3 - Turkey Vulture	2 - Ruby-crowned Kinglet
	1 - Spotted Sandpiper	3 - Mountain Bluebird
	1 - Black-backed Woodpecker	2 - Townsend's Solitaire
	2 - Olive-sided Flycatcher	2 - Hermit Thrush
	2 - Western Wood-Pewee	4 - Chipping Sparrow
	3 - Cassin's Vireo	3 - Dark-eyed Junco
	2 - Clark's Nutcracker	1 - Lincoln's Sparrow
	2 - Common Raven	3 - Western Tanager
	2 - Violet-green Swallow	2-Cassin's Finch
	1 - Brown Creeper	2 - Pine Siskin
	2 - House Wren	

# Meet the NCWAS Board

An Ongoing Series  
by Penny Tobiska, Wenatchee

Janet Bauer, one of our newer board members, lives in the Methow Valley and is an avid hiker, skier and photographer. You may have noticed some of her photos in past issues of the Wild Phlox.

## Tell us about your background and how you became interested in the natural world.

I think I was born with a keen interest in the natural world as many of my childhood hours were spent collecting rocks, butterflies and shells. After finishing high school in Michigan, I headed west to study wildlife biology at the University of Montana. My years in Missoula greatly deepened my love and connection to the outdoors and desire to support organizations that work to preserve our environment. I eventually made physical therapy my career for 35 years and



Janet Bauer  
photo provided

have enjoyed getting my patients outside whenever possible. As my career winds down and I have more time, I often carry a camera when I head out because there's nothing better than being able to bring an image of a beautiful bird back home.

**The Phlox has featured several of your photographs over the last year. When you are not photographing wildlife, what do you like to be doing?** I like to be outside whether it's in my garden, diving into cold water, hiking, biking, skiing or kayaking. I love to share outdoor time with family and friends. My husband and I enjoy traveling to visit our sons and explore new wild places.

**Do you have any hints for taking good photos of birds or other wildlife?** I'm no expert but I'd say it helps to get out in the morning or late afternoon in order to capture the best light. Researching your subject beforehand can help guide you to places where you might find success. Since birds and other wildlife usually will not let you get very close, a good telephoto lens and plenty of patience and perseverance are essential.

**What are your favorite birding locations in North Central Washington?** We're so lucky to have many places in our region that are great birding spots. In Wenatchee, I love birding at Walla Walla Point Park, Horan Natural Area, and anywhere along the Foothills Trails. Up here in the Methow, some favorites are the Beaver Pond trail at Sun Mt, Pearrygin Lake, and the Classroom in Bloom garden at the Methow Valley Elementary School.

## Water, Wind & Fire: Saving our farms, forests, and fish while strengthening our economy

by Jen Syrowitz, Chapter Conservation Manager,  
Audubon Washington

Audubon Washington has been working with members of Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) to develop, organize, and advertise a conversational tour around

November 6, 7:00 pm, Grove Recital Hall,  
Wenatchee Valley College, Wenatchee  
November 7, 6:30 pm, 12 Tribes Casino in Omak  
November 8, 7:00 pm, The Merc Playhouse in Twisp

eastern Washington to discuss a) how our changing climate may be impacting eastern Washington natural resources, communities, and livelihoods and b) how a price on carbon pollution could help mitigate these impacts, without hurting the economy. CCL's carbon pricing proposal - carbon fee and dividend - will be highlighted. At the same time, Audubon's message will be clear: we are interested in all feasible solutions that will reduce carbon pollution causing climate change.

The tour is called *Water, Wind & Fire: Saving our farms, forests, and fish while strengthening our economy*. Together,

our aim is to generate discussion on how climate change may be affecting people in your community, help normalize the idea of a price on carbon, and galvanize support for action on climate change.

Birds are a non-partisan climate change messenger – a safe vessel by which to discuss the changes we are seeing in the natural world around us due to a warming climate. Birds are also a powerful motivator for taking action to protect wild places, our communities, and our livelihoods. Everyone has a bird story. We'll be in town to hear the bird and climate stories of your community.

For more information contact Jen Syrowitz at [jsyrowitz@audubon.org](mailto:jsyrowitz@audubon.org) or 206-652-2444 x108



# Climate Vulnerability and Forest Management in the West

## One Stick at a Time Film Screening & Discussion

photo and article by Julie Ashmore,  
Okanogan Highlands

For the last year, Kent Woodruff, a retired US Forest Service biologist from Winthrop, has been engaging people across the west in discussions about what we can do to

soften the impacts of climate change. As our already dry landscape and water resources become impacted by climate change, this topic will be increasingly relevant to our ecological and human communities.

Kent worked for 41 years as a wildlife biologist. He is concerned that all the resources we manage, including forests and rangelands, streams and rivers, roads and trails, sensitive plants, and our important recreation areas are all facing stress from climate change that increases each year.

A new level of cooperation and conservation planning is needed in order to prepare for shifts in the intricate balance of ecological relationships. Now is the time to protect the biodiversity that makes our region so unique.

On Friday, November 3rd, Kent will share an independent film about the climate adaptation work that he has done with beavers, and the attempts of others in Washington to find some solutions to the impacts that continue to become more intense. Community members

will learn what biologists are doing in the Methow valley, and the film will serve as a conversation starter to encourage sharing of thoughts about what can be done to

make our landscapes more resilient to climate change.

OHA is a non-profit organization that works to educate the public on watershed issues. The Highland Wonders educational series features the natural history of the Okanogan Highlands and surrounding areas. OHA's Education Program is designed to build the community's capacity for environmental stewardship by increasing understanding of local natural history through a variety of free public learning opportunities.

More info about this and other free upcoming educational events: [www.okanoganhighlands.org/education/hw](http://www.okanoganhighlands.org/education/hw)

You can subscribe to event videos on YouTube under "OHA's Highland Wonders." This educational event is provided by OHA, and hosted at the CCC. The presentation is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, WCS and the US Forest Service. For more information contact Julie at 476-2432.

**Event at a Glance:**  
**When:** Friday, November 3, at 6:30 pm. Dinner at 5:15 pm, followed by the presentation with tea, coffee and desserts.  
**Cost:** Presentation is free; dinner is \$8 for CCC members and \$9 for non-members; desserts by donation (benefit for the CCC).  
**Where:** Community Cultural Center 411 S Western Ave, Tonasket



In recent years, beavers have greatly increased the water storage capacity of the Lost Lake wetland, making more water available during late-season flows.

## Learn About Banking Seeds

October 12, 7:00 pm, Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center. Wendy Gibble, Manager of Conservation and Education, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, will talk about **Seed Banking, An Age-old Art Used for a New Purpose.**

A seed is one of nature's marvelous adaptations. It makes the perfect receptacle for an embryonic plant, providing protection from the elements and transportation to a new home. Early humans took advantage of seeds' resilient

by Molly Boyter, Wenatchee

nature, storing them through winter months and transporting them over trade routes. Today, seeds are serving another purpose, this time for their own species benefit. In this talk, Wendy Gibble will explore the biology of seeds, seed dormancy and how it is used in seed banking, and some of the ways we break dormancy to initiate germination. She will also talk about seed banks in the US and their efforts to conserve rare native species. For more information, contact Molly Boyter, [mollyboyter@hotmail.com](mailto:mollyboyter@hotmail.com).



Clark's Nutcracker on ponderosa pine  
photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

# A Very Birdy Hawk Migration Festival

by Richard Scranton, Wenatchee

On the weekend of September 16, NCW Audubon, the Chelan-Entiat Ranger District and HawkWatch International (HWI) held the 8th annual Hawk Migration Festival!

On Friday night, Dr. David Oleyar from HWI talked to a group of over fifty birders about the dynamics of raptor migration and listed several tips for identifying raptors on the wing. This information was very useful for those that planned to visit the Chelan Ridge Hawk Watch site the next day.

Saturday started early with a birding field trip to Wells Wildlife Area led by Mark Johnston and Virginia Palumbo. The group saw over fifty bird species, including Gray Catbird, Orange-crowned warbler, four species of grebes and Sandhill Cranes that were flying overhead.

A total of sixty people attended the morning and afternoon trips up to the HawkWatch site at Chelan Ridge. They were ushered out to the observation platform where biologists and volunteers count raptors as they make their way south for the winter. Twenty-seven birds were counted including two Northern

Goshawks and a Swainson's Hawk. Fourteen birds were banded including a Merlin and a Northern Harrier.



Mark Oswood talks about the NCWAS display. photo by Mark Johnston, Leavenworth

The WSU Raptor Club displayed raptors at Memorial park in Pateros, including a Red-tailed hawk, American Kestrel and Northern Saw-whet owl. Brad Felger, a master falconer from Mount Vernon,



A Great Horned Owl from the WSU Raptor Club. photo by Merry Roy, Wenatchee

Birdhouses, the Methow Beaver Project, the US Forest Service, and North Central Washington Audubon maintained busy exhibits throughout the day.

We can't thank the Forest Service enough for the time and effort they put into this event. Chelan-Entiat Ranger District biologist, Ana Cerro-Timpone, the new coordinator for HawkWatch, worked tirelessly along with the staff of dedicated volunteers up on the ridge to help make the participants' visit a memorable experience.

Along with Dr. Dave Oleyar, HWI sent educator Janet Nelson and she talked with students from the Pateros School District at an assembly on Friday and staffed a booth on Saturday.

Lastly, the City of Pateros worked hard to make this the best Hawk Migration Festival ever. The City Manager, the Mayor, the Fire District, the Chamber of Commerce, the Resource Center, and the School District played integral roles to ensure a smooth-running event.

We heard positive feedback about this year's event and we hope to see many more bird enthusiasts next year.



Brad Felger, a master falconer from Mount Vernon with his Gyrfalcon photo by Penny Tobiska, Wenatchee



Dave Oleyar from HWI holds an eight week old Merlin, small and feisty, at Chelan Ridge. The bird is banded and ready to be released. He flew away without hesitation as soon as he was let go. photo by Joe Roy, Wenatchee

displayed several of his birds. Jim Ulrich from Wild Birds Unlimited displayed a variety of binoculars and scopes. Daniel's

## *October Wild Phlox*

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### North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

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October 12	Seed Banking	Native Plant Society program in Wenatchee. See page 6
November 3	One Stick at a Time	Climate Vulnerability and Forest Management. An Okanogan Highlands presentation. See page 6
<b>November 6</b>	<b>Water, Wind and Fire</b>	<b>Changing Climate and the Economy. In Wenatchee. See page 5</b>
November 7	Water, Wind and Fire	Changing Climate and the Economy. In Omak. See page 5
November 8	Water, Wind and Fire	Changing Climate and the Economy. In Twisp. See page 5



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