

NCW Audubon Society Has a New Website!

by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

The times have changed. Mobile devices have become the most common means by which people are accessing the internet. It is estimated that in 2020 over fifty percent of global web traffic comes through our phones. Yes, the times have changed and the North Central Washington Audubon Society (NCWAS) needed to update our website. You can find the new website at the same address as before: www.ncwaudubon.org. If possible, I'd recommend that you look at the site on your computer or device as you read this article. Clicking through the website along with the descriptions will help orient you to the content. When you open the website, you will see a totally new look and feel. At the top of the page you'll find tabs that contain the "big chunks" of the site: Home, Get Involved, Activities, What We Do, Resources, Who We Are, and News/Blog. Let's look at each in a bit more detail.

Home: Watch this page for information about current events and NCWAS activities. You'll find links to the recent blog posts under "Latest News" as well.

Get Involved: Becoming a member of NCW Audubon Society has never been easier. Clicking on "*Join*" takes you to a page where you can select any one of three ways to donate and become an NCWAS member. You can become a member of NCWAS by joining the National Audubon Society, by donating to NCWAS online, or by printing a form to mail in. Pick the option that is best for you. If you select "*Volunteer*" you will learn about any opportunities for which we may need your help or how you can volunteer for other partners or collaborators.

Activities: The Covid-19 pandemic has radically altered how we organize and conduct a variety of bird walks, educational programs, or face-to-face activities. Once the CDC and State guidelines allow us to resume, we will begin to schedule and announce all the activities you have seen in the past. We all look forward to that time.

What We Do: We put a majority of what we do as an organization into three categories: *Conservation, Outreach*, and *Education*. Under "*Conservation*" you'll find information about the current areas in which we are involved. Take time to explore them to see how your Audubon chapter is working to achieve

local, national, and global conservation efforts. "Outreach" shows a list of the major ways that we interact with you and others. Our participation in a variety of festivals, our annual photo contest, our popular Common Birds of North Central Washington poster, the Wild Phlox newsletter, and social media are the backbone of our outreach efforts. The "Education" tab takes you to a page that describes and lets you explore information about a variety of activities, speaker or community programs that are coming up, bird walks or tours, or various birding resources. The page also has two recent video programs about birds that were prepared for our partners to use as online resources during the pandemic.

Resources: This page has links to many useful products to support your birding passion. You can read or download our current Wild Phlox newsletter and all the historic newsletters. Monthly bird articles from The Good Life magazine are accessible here, too. You'll find a list of our primary partners and groups we collaborate with; all allow you to quickly link to the website for each group. We provide you with a list of national and state-wide birding organizations and resources. The "Birding" page provides links to a wide variety of birding resources such as bird checklists, the Great Washington State Birding Trail, eBird, Audubon and Cornell Labs, and our interactive birding routes in north central Washington. If you see a bird that is unusual or rare you can report it using the link to the Recent Bird Sightings page. Once you've entered the information you can see your observation listed along with sightings reported by others. It takes about five minutes to update the spreadsheet. You could use that time to search other parts of the website. We are developing a bird photo gallery page that will, once complete, show photos of the common birds in our area. We hope that this page will help you identify and learn about our birds.

Last on the list of Resources is a compilation of materials that you can download for your use. Information that ties to our conservation efforts is there, including downloadable PDF copies of letters and publications. You can download several PDF bird checklists here. *Continued on page 7*.

The mission of the North Central Washington Audubon Society is to:

"Enhance, protect and restore healthy natural ecosystems and native biodiversity using science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground conservation to promote the welfare of birds in North Central Washington"

North Central Washington Audubon Society

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Tentative Christmas Bird Count Dates

by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley

On page seven, you can read an article about the National Audubon Society's guidelines for Christmas Bird Counts in the year of covid-19. As you can imagine, CBC's won't be the same. Some of the compilers have polled their regular bird counters and feel that they will have enough volunteers to go ahead with the count. So far, these tentative dates have been set:

Leavenworth: December 15 Wenatchee: December 30

Chelan: January 2 Twisp: January 3

Of course, if the covid situation expands or gets worse, CBC's may be cancelled

altogether.

North Central Washington Audubon Society Wild Phlox Subscription Form			
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Did you get snow in October? I think most of our four-county region did. At my house, I am looking at about five inches of wet snow, soon to turn into solid ice if the forecast for frigid overnight temperatures is correct. I put out extra bird seed yesterday and now need to find the

Editor's Notes

device that keeps their water from freezing. It's all just a little bit early. The porch furniture is still outside; the camper needs to be stored for winter; snow tires need to be installed. Hopefully, the snow will stay in the mountains but give us valley residents a bit of a break so we can clean up our messes! I wonder if this early winter weather means it will be a good year for watching interesting finches and Snowy Owls? I have not seen any predictions for winter birding yet.

I recently returned from a two-week camping trip and one of my favorite campsites was at Page Springs, a BLM campground adjacent to the south end of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. At night I enjoyed listening to Great Horned Owls nearby and from across the way I heard a pair of Western Screech Owls. The weather was unseasonably hot for October and I spent several afternoons next to the Blitzen River under the shade of a big alder tree reading my book and watching Ruby-crowned Kinglets forage for tiny insects. One day, I was surprised by a Sharp-shinned Hawk who flew in under the canopy in pursuit of a smaller bird. I think both were surprised by my presence. The little bird got away and the hawk beat a hasty retreat. Another day, a Pied-billed Grebe on the opposite side of the small river provided entertainment for me and my dogs.

Did you buy a duck stamp this year? Did you notice anything new about it? The National Audubon Society reports that the Trump administration rewrote the rules for the annual duck stamp competition sponsored by US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In May, the USFWS changed the competition's rules to make its permanent theme "celebrating our waterfowl hunting heritage." And it added a requirement that all submitted artworks "must also include appropriate waterfowl hunting-

related accessories or elements." When Audubon first reported on the rule change, before it was formally proposed, artists and conservationists—including hunters - worried that it would alienate a big portion of annual duck stamp buyers and depress sales. That would be a significant loss for conservation. The USFWS uses revenue from stamp sales to acquire and protect wetland habitat that waterfowl and other wildlife need. Since 1934, the stamps have raised more than \$1 billion to purchase some 6 million acres of habitat at more than 300 national wildlife refuges. Encouraging non-hunters to buy the stamps is especially important, critics of the rule change say, because hunting participation continues to dwindle; just 4 percent of Americans aged 16 or older hunted in 2016, while 34 percent participated in wildlife watching. This year's winning painting features a discarded duck call.

In local bird-related art news, the North Central Washington Audubon Society is pleased to announce that our annual photo contest will begin on December 1. Watch for an official announcement and details on our website (www.ncwaudubon.org) and an article in an upcoming Phlox.



Killdeer photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

NCW Recent Bird Sightings

Chelan: A Black-throated Blue Warbler was seen near Leavenworth. Flocks of Snow Geese have been seen at Lake Wenatchee. A late Common Yellowthroat and a Spruce Grouse were seen on the Cutthroat Peak trail. A White-tailed Ptarmigan was seen near Leavenworth. A Rough-legged Hawk was seen on the Cashmere Canyons Preserve.

Douglas: A Great Egret was seen at Chief Joseph Dam. American Pipits and a Golden Eagle were seen at Lincoln Rock State Park. A Red-necked Grebe and a Surf Scoter were seen on the river from East Wenatchee. A Loggerhead Shrike was seen from Rock Island Grade. A Blue Jay is visiting feeders in Bridgeport.

Ferry: A Pacific Loon and Red-necked Grebes were seen at Haag Cove on Lake Roosevelt. A Blue Jay was seen and

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

photographed in eastern Ferry County. A Black-backed Woodpecker was seen at the Sherman Pass Overlook. An American Three-toed Woodpecker was seen on Albian Hill Road.

Okanogan: An Anna's Hummingbird and four White-fronted Geese were seen between Twisp and Winthrop. A Long-tailed Duck has been seen at Twin Lakes. A Great Egret was reported at Chief Joseph Dam. A White-winged Scoter was seen on Lake Pateros. A Red-breasted Sapsucker was seen at Washington Pass. A White-tailed Ptarmigan was seen at Slate Peak. American Pipits were seen at Pearrygin State Park. A Golden Eagle was seen flying over Winthrop. Rough-legged Hawks were reported at Patterson Mountain. Snow Geese were seen at Twin Lakes.

NCW Audubon Partners with ¡Team Naturaleza!

by Merry Roy and Elisa Lopez, Wenatchee

Welcome to ¡Team Naturaleza!, NCW Audubon's newest partner! Partnering allows us to share information about hikes and resources as well as affirming our common values and goals. The Latino community values nature and the out-of-doors and the opportunity to get out with their families. Look for upcoming bilingual hikes and educational programs and join in. Elisa Lopez, the director of TN, shares more about the organization.

In 2009-2011, The Environment for the Americas, through a National Science Foundation grant, conducted a three-year survey across the United States. North Central Washington was one of six survey sites. The survey identified North Central Washington as an area with 70% first-generation families, where respondents did not feel they knew about programs available to get them outdoors. The survey identified practical barriers (i.e., time, cost, and transportation) as large issues for low income families to get outside and experience nature.

The survey also identified that an essential missing piece was a trusted community liaison. Having a respected liaison between the Latino communities and the public agencies or organizations conducting nature education programs and events would improve communications and help foster conservation through the generations. Thus, ¡Team Naturaleza! was pulled together.

Programming goals of ¡Team Naturaleza! are to 1) remove barriers to connect people with nature by offering bilingual nature walks and field studies co-led by area scientists; 2) Empower the Latino community through natural science education: teach participants to have the skills and knowledge to be able to return to field sites independently with their families; 3) Engage attendees, volunteers, and

students in conservation discussions and issues; and 4)
Attain healthier lifestyles, as a by-product for getting people outdoors.

One of our most successful birding outings happened in February of 2020 at the Horan Natural Area. Over 25 people attended to participate in a non-formal bird count. TN staff did not ask for in-advance registrations because we expected only 10-12 people to attend, our average. This event showed us that participants are excited about heading outdoors and participating in the environmental education portion of our organization as well.

Now in 2020, Team Naturaleza still remains the only source of completely bilingual environmental educational with outdoor leadership. We invite people of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds to join our events. Our bilingual hikes have resumed following COVID-19 guidelines



Long-tailed Duck at Big Twin Lake Janet Bauer, Winthrop

Methow Valley Bird Banding 2020 Results

The year 2020 marked the fourth nesting season I have operated a MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) bird banding station in the Methow Valley, and like everything else in 2020, the ability to operate the MAPS station in the midst of a global pandemic was questionable. Would the landowners allow me to band on their property? Would any volunteers be willing to help? And would it be possible to capture, band, and process birds while wearing a mask? Fortunately, the landowners and volunteers said yes, and with some trial and error we adapted to wearing masks and safely completed all seven of the required MAPS banding sessions.

I have been banding birds for fourteen years, and despite the questionable start, 2020 turned out to be my most productive MAPS season ever with 195 captured birds and 32 different

by Julie Hovis, Winthrop

species! The most commonly captured species were MacGillivray's Warbler, Yellow Warbler (22 captures), and Purple Finch (16 captures). Other notable species included American Redstart, Nashville Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, and Red-naped Sapsucker. As always, I want to thank the volunteers who helped out at the station in 2020, and the landowners who allowed me to band birds on their property.

My banding activities are over for this year, but I am planning to operate the MAPS station again in 2021 (hopefully in a world free of COVID-19). If you would like to know more about the MAPS program or bird banding, please take a look at a blog I posted recently on NCW Audubon's website (https://ncwaudubon.org/methow-valley-bird-banding-2020/).

Twilight

by Paul Anderman, Leavenworth

The hot day descends now into night, taking the first celestial step, the sun going behind Icicle Ridge. Slowly this shadow creeps along the valley. Not so slowly, really. The planet is spinning around 750 mph at this latitude, which makes it seem odd that this ridge-shadow moves so slowly. You can watch this shadow move if you mark it with chalk or something. And in watching that slow steady progression you can feel the great planet moving under you. We're mostly not aware of this, though.

The searing heat of a July day cools when the sun is gone, as if the sun has been driving photons at you all day long and now it can't, and it took a large mountain range to do that. Things begin to settle.

A hayfield at the edge of town releases its country-smell, looking very green and soon tall enough to mow. Many people take an after-dinner stroll. Some still hold hands, and don't stroll, but amble, wander, mosey, meander. There are kids on bikes, on skateboards. There are people with little dogs, on wind-up leashes, like fish on a line. The skyblue sky loses its brilliance.

A robin on a wire, a solitaire, nesting season done, this one an exhausted mom, happy now to be alone. Pigeons together, on another wire, herd birds. Swallows dart, at the evening population of tiny insects. Just about everything either eats another or is eaten by another, a grim war of lunch. The sky has turned a grey in its blue.

The river has gone quiet now, no more rafters or tubers or swimmers or others. For a few hours through the night, it can just be a quiet river in a silent valley, somewhere in the mountains. An osprey takes a last search, no luck, and makes its one chirp. A hidden heron looks up at the sound, then back down and into its thoughts. Herons might think great things, eternal things. They seem so contemplative when you find them.

Its dim now, a few lights have come on. It doesn't seem dark, but from inside a room looking out, night has fallen. Outside, our eyes have adjusted. It's never completely dark. Even on cloudy nights with no moon, there still is enough ambient light. The dark is light enough.

The first star has come out, and it twinkles. That's the shifting heat waves from the hot planet. Twinkle does not sound like an appropriate word for an adult to say. This is a child-word. Night falls in its serene quiet eternal way, most of us not taking any notice. In day, we're busy with something, then it is night, and we're still busy with something, and didn't notice the in-between, twilight. The eternal happens around us every day, but we have more important things to do.

The sky fills with stars, the magic of tiny lights spill overhead. The Romans called it Via Lactaea because it looked like spilled milk. We call it the same thing, the Milky Way. It's an arm of a galaxy. We live in a small town in the mountains, in the galaxy called Milky Way. Twilight falls. The planet moves, the vast universe spreads out, full of dark and tiny lights, the stars.

The silent river, now black between its banks, moves through the quiet dark.

The day, billions of days, full of celestial motions, orbits, planetary spins, a moon, and twilight, ends. Night begins.

Kestrel Conundrum

Dozens, maybe more than one hundred, American Kestrel boxes that provided safe nesting and brood rearing sites for the last thirty years in north central Washington were lost in early September to the Cold Springs fire. Lots more important habitat for dozens of important native species was also impacted. Discussions are beginning about a cooperative project to replace the kestrel boxes that were lost. Watch for a story about the history and future of the project in an upcoming Wild Pholx. In the meantime, help us think about the future of kestrels on the Waterville Plateau. If you might be willing to help kestrel recovery - send an email to kentwoodruff@gmail.com.

photo and article by Kent Woodruff, Twisp



Richard Hendrix inspects a kestrel box last June

Movie Review: Birders, the Central Park Effect

by Susan Sampson, Wenatchee

Consider, just for a moment, some geography. The State of New York's extreme southeast corner is a peninsula and a cluster of three islands. The City of New York covers the peninsula, the tip of Long Island, and all of Staten and Manhattan Islands. Connecticut lies to the north, the remainder of Long Island to the east, and New Jersey to the west across the Hudson River. Manhattan Island is squeezed between the peninsula and the Jersey Shore. In the middle of Manhattan Island lies Central Park, covering 1.3 square miles. The City houses a population of 8.399 million people within a major metropolitan area of 18,804,000 people. The Park, the City, and the Metropolitan Area lie directly in the path of the Atlantic migratory bird flyway.

Central Park was established before the Civil War, in 1857, and was built through 1878. Today, it serves 38 million visitors every year, visitors who stroll among tree-lined boulevards, ride in horse-drawn carriages, run for fitness, throw Frisbees®, explore its wild-looking areas, and play their saxophones. The Park hosts hundreds of bird species and the birders who watch them. Literally millions of birds fly over during their annual migrations.

So, what are all those birds doing in a major metropolitan area? They are responding to a "funnel effect." Flying thousands of miles between South and Central America and Canada and seeing little other available habitat to stop and eat at along the way, the birds are channeled into Central Park (and similarly to other large parks around the nation.)

Producer and director Jeffrey Kimball has put together a pleasant documentary about the Park, its birds, and its birders, while at the same time, taking note of the man-made stresses on the lives of the birds. "Birders, the Central Park Effect" introduces us to an array of birders who, having no nearby wilderness areas, are channeled into the Park themselves just like the birds. Old men carrying cameras with lenses the size of sewer pipes trade insults among one another like the friends they are; real men would be out fishing, one of them jibes. A teenage girl admits that she is one of the cool kids at school but goes everywhere with her binoculars and is a "bird nerd" otherwise. In the movie, seventy-three-year-old Starr Saphir leads tours through the park, twice weekly, during the spring, charging \$6.00 per head, and makes enough to get by. She is disappointed if she can't see 100 species each January and 150 each February. (She died shortly after being filmed.)

The movie also shows us several hundred species of birds in the Park, including many that are familiar here in the Pacific Northwest, like Canada Geese, Cedar Waxwings, egrets, and Mallards, and many that are east coast only, such as cardinals and some of the neotropical migrants.

Author Jonathan Rosen (*The Life of the Skies: Birding at the End of Nature*) is one of the narrators of the movie. To him, birding in the park satisfies his craving for a connection

to nature, "mediating" between the built and the natural environment. Another is prominent novelist and birdwatcher Jonathan Franzen ("My Bird Problem," New Yorker, Aug 9, 2005; "Why I'm a Birder," Audubon March-April 2013)

When his friends wondered why birder Chris Cooper disappeared into the park for two months each spring, he wrote down his seven pleasures of birding: 1. Beauty 2. The natural setting. 3. Scientific discovery. 4. Hunting with no bloodshed. 5. Solving puzzles such as identifying a bird only glimpsed. 6. Collecting - keeping a life list. 7. The unicorn effect of knowing a bird only by its mythical status until suddenly one sees one, like seeing a movie star in person.

Coincidentally, Christian Cooper was the man thrown into the news in May, 2020 when he asked a woman to leash her dog in the Park. She replied by threatening to call the police, to tell them that she and her dog were being threatened by a Black man. He filmed the incident with his phone. His sister Melody Cooper placed the video on the internet, as she explained in an essay in the New York Times, https://nytimes.com/2020/05/31/opinion/chris-cooper-central-park.html. Her post went viral. Mr. Cooper, who is a Harvard graduate, science writer, editor, and comic book editor, has turned the incident into a graphic novel for D.C. Comics. Entitled "Represent! It's a Bird," it is free online. To read a copy, google readdc.com, go to "free comics," select the comic, and choose Amazon, or a different app to download it if you prefer.

As in all the best nature movies, there are no "spoilers" I could tell you that would ruin this movie for you. When I watch a movie I like, I read the credits all the way to the end, through dozens of dolly grips and polygrips to final logos for dolby and dts. For this movie, the credits presented me one more treat: The stars it listed were the 200-some species of birds shown during its 61-minute run.

Birders, the Central Park Effect, 2013 ©, produced and directed by Jeffrey Kimball. available on Amazon Prime.



Bonaparte's Gull at Pearrygin Lake photo by Janet Bauer, Winthrop

A Real-Life Snipe Hunt

By Merry Roy, Wenatchee

Going on a snipe hunt? This was the new camper initiation ritual when I went to Girl Scout camp in Wisconsin long ago. The greenhorn snipe hunter, armed with a gunny sack and a flashlight would be taken into the woods and encouraged to call the elusive snipe - here snipe snipe, here snipe snipe - and shine her flashlight around hoping to spot a snipe, whatever that was. I pictured it to be a small furry animal, imaginary of course because I was a seasoned Girl Scout camper. Us old campers would stand around with our flashlights and snicker behind our hands until finally we all called it quits and returned to our tents, snipe-less.

Imagine my surprise when years later I discovered that there is such a thing as a snipe, and it is not a small furry animal. The Wilson's Snipe, *Gallinago delicata*, is a ten-inch shorebird with an eighteeninch wingspan, weighing in at 3.7 ounces.

They are year-round residents of western Washington, and they probe for worms and grubs on the edges of freshwater ponds or in the muddy stubble of flooded fields, which was where I found them. The striking cream-colored stripes on mottled brown bodies and sturdy bills almost half the length of their body would seem to make snipes easy to spot, but easy to spot they are not. Muddy stubble being brown and cream-colored is the perfect background for camouflage, and they blend right in.

My husband and I were on our third time creeping at five miles per hour around the 4.2 mile auto loop at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge north of Portland when I spotted movement in the plowed field, movement that was not a Killdeer. Still staring through my binoculars, it took me a long time to realize that the field was teeming with snipe. We estimated fifty

of them. Like looking for mushrooms, after you finally find the first one, you see others all over. It is like your brain needs first to have a template of what it's registering. Snipe were probing, preening, fanning their tails, making short dashes, and snuggling into the mud for brief snoozes. When they were still, they looked just like a clod of dirt.

I don't know if others in cars stopping near the field were seeing what we saw, but I know they didn't stay as long as we did. I know that one car came whizzing along at probably 10 mph, and a flock of snipe took off, flying low over the field to the freshwater pond in the distance.

We saw them again the next day. I can assure you, dear former summer-camper, that snipes are real, they are not furry, and as you knew, they are truly hard to find.

Guidelines for the 121st Audubon Christmas Bird Count

from The National Audubon Society

Due to the COVID19 outbreak, this year's Christmas Bird Count will require a few changes if your count is to take place at all. The two options for Christmas Bird Count compilers are as follows:

Option 1: Run a COVID-19 safe and socially distanced CBC if local rules allow. [Must wait until November 15 at the earliest to choose this option to better understand status of COVID outbreak in your region during the CBC.]

Option 2: If option 1 is not possible, cancel this season's CBC for your location. [Can choose this option now if you wish.] If you choose option 1, below are the guidelines that we urge you to follow: 1) Wait until November 15 at the earliest to confirm CBC will take place if local regulations allow. 2) Cancel all in-person compilation gatherings. 3) Social distancing and/or masking are always required in the field. 4) Carpooling may only occur within existing familial or social "pod" groups. 5) Activities must comply with all current state and municipal COVID-19 guidelines.

If you feel it is not safe to move forward with your CBC and choose option 2, please know that Audubon fully supports your decision to cancel. The safety of our compilers and community scientists will always be our top priority.

See page two for potential dates of local Christmas Bird Counts

Our New Website - contiuned from page 1

Who We Are: This section of the website contains information about the four-county area we represent, our mission and role, and the underpinnings of NCWAS. The "*Who We Are*" page also leads you to a list of the NCWAS Board members. Each member is linked to their email so you can send a note to any of us.

News/Blog: The blog page is totally new. Think of this area as the "current content" of our website. Categories and searchable tags make it easy to find articles. You'll find links to all the recent articles on the Home page.

I hope you will take some time to explore the new website and let us know how it goes for you. Send us a comment (yes, you can do that by clicking on the always-present "contact" button at the top of any page) to tell us what you like, don't like, or want to see on the site. This is a great time to test the new website by filling in the form on the Home page to sign up for our email notifications of events and important news. We hope you visit often and share the site with all your birding friends.

November Wild Phlox

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Bird Sightings	Report your sightings and contribute to community-based science	www.wabirder.com/county_yearlist.html or www.ebird.org/home	
Where to Go Birding	Socially distanced, of course	www.ncwaudubon.org/BirdingSite/index2.php and www.wabirdguide.org/	
CDLT Field Guide	Native plants, weeds and trails around Wenatchee	www.cdlandtrust.org/trails-access/field-guide	
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The beautiful photos are even nicer in color.



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