

The Wild Phlox

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NCW Christmas Bird Count Reports

compiled by Julie Hovis, Winthrop

Bridgeport, reported by Mike Schroeder

Meredith Spencer and I thank all who helped make the 27th annual Bridgeport Christmas Bird Count a success on December 14. We observed 78 species with an estimated count of 8,805 birds. We had a lot of snow on the ground, and as a result access throughout the count circle was limited. The number of species was the second lowest in the history of the circle, with the lowest being our first year which was also snowy. The number of birds was the lowest in the count's history, more than 14,000 birds below our long-term average! The only notable increase for this count was the Bald Eagle. With the snow conditions and dead deer, eagles seem to have responded positively. Almost all individual species had lower counts this year when compared with long-term averages. This included Common Loon, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, California Quail, American Coot, Great Horned Owl, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Black-billed Magpie, Black-capped Chickadee, European Starling, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and House Finch. Not a single owl was observed this year. During the count's 27-year history, 44 species have been observed every year and 163 species have been observed at least once on count day (not counting nine species only observed during count week). Thank you again and we hope to see you next year!

Chelan, reported by Steve Easley

The 34th annual Chelan Christmas Bird Count took place on December 17. There were 11 traveling participants and 3 home feeder and backyard watchers. We had 8 to 10 inches of snow at lower elevations and up to 30 inches in Union Valley and Purtteman Gulch, so the overwhelming count effort was by car. Temperatures were in the lower 20s and it was overcast but calm. We found 76 species, nearly equal to the 34-year average of 77 in spite of our limited mobility. We counted 7,447 individuals, which was 24 percent less than the 34-year average of 9,800 and reflects the downward trend of birds counted during the past 10 years. Generally, the count was higher than average for game birds, but lower than average for waterfowl and raptors. After leveling off for a few years, the Eurasian Collared-Dove reached a new high count of

344. In spite of the cold weather, a home feeder watcher on Bear Mountain counted two Anna's Hummingbirds.

Leavenworth, reported by Joe Veverka

I'd like to thank everyone for coming out on December 20 and counting birds in completely adverse and memorable conditions! Because some participants took on multiple routes, we were able to complete all but one route. There were a few things of note. First, we had terrible weather! This had a huge effect on detectability and our ability to cover all the areas we wanted to visit. We managed to get the Acorn Woodpecker that had been hanging around Leavenworth during the count week period, but we were unable to locate it on count day. We had two Western Bluebirds up Hay Canyon, and two groups found a Northern Goshawk! Comparing total count day numbers to previous years we did pretty well considering the weather. We found 54 species and counted 2,117 individuals. This year the most abundant species was once again the Dark-eyed Junco with 457 individuals compared to 567 counted last year and 566 during the 2020 count. House Finches were the runner-up again with 276 individuals compared to 425 last year. The third most abundant species last year was the Pine Siskin with 381 individuals; this year we counted zero. We also only counted 43 California Quail, down from 283 last year. I am looking to hand off the coordinating and compiling responsibilities for next year's Leavenworth count. Please reach out to me at joe_veverka@yahoo.com if you'd be interested in volunteering your time for this worthy event!

Okangogan, reported by Todd Thorn

The Okanogan Christmas Bird Count was held on December 18. The snow was deep and in exposed areas the wind was blistering. Our small but stalwart group made the best of it, visiting, snacking, and feasting on Dan's chili after the count while sharing tales of the day. It was especially fun to welcome several newcomers along on the count. Two of them found lifers during the day! We sighted 60 bird species and a total of 4,641 individual birds.

Continued on page 5.

The mission of the North Central Washington Audubon Society is to:
 “Enhance, protect, and restore healthy ecosystems and native biodiversity using science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground conservation to promote the welfare of birds in North Central Washington”

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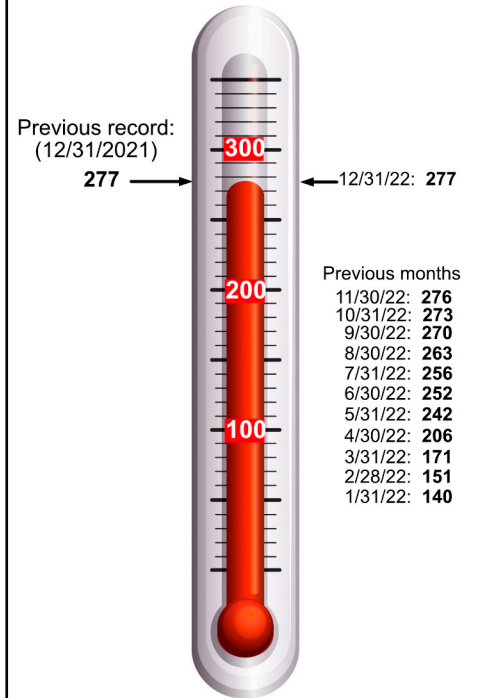
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2022 eBird

Total Number of Bird Species Entered

NCWAS four-county area End of month counts



Jan-Dec 2022 eBird stats

Total observers: 1,230

Total checklists: 17,580

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To join the National Audubon Society, which also includes a subscription to the Wild Phlox, please see our website at www.ncwaudubon.org

News and Announcements!

compiled by Julie Hovis, Winthrop

Editor's Note: I received so much material for this issue of the Phlox there is not much room for my comments. But I would like to point out that the number of bird species reported to eBird for the NCWAS four-county area was exactly the same in 2021 and 2022 (see page 2)! I'd also like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue. Your continued support of the newsletter is much appreciated!

Hummingbird Presentation April 6, 2023. Bruce McCammon will present a short program in Wenatchee as part of the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center's Environmental Film and Speaker Series. The program will include an introduction to hummingbirds in the New World and then focus on the four species found in north central Washington. Bruce will share recent information collected through the NCWAS Hummingbird Project and a short video of 2021 Anna's Hummingbird nesting success in the Wenatchee Valley. The program starts at 7:00 pm.

Nature Writing Workshop and Red Barn Speaking Event April 13, 2023. Marina Richie, author of the award winning book, *Halcyon Journey*, will be giving a nature writing workshop in the afternoon, followed by a Red Barn speaking event at the Wenatchee River Institute, 7:00 pm live (and virtual). For more information contact Joshua Schaub at jschaub@wenatcheeriverinstitute.org or 509-548-0181.

Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest May 18-21, 2023. Planning for the 2023 Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest has begun! The NCWAS Bird Fest planners are eagerly designing the new festival in collaboration with the Wenatchee River Institute. We want to capitalize on the success of the 2022 festival and add more trips and conservation community events to the mix. University of Washington Professor John Marzluff, author of several popular books on birds and conservation, including *In Search of Meadowlarks: Birds, Farms, and Food in Harmony with the Land* (2020), will be our keynote speaker. In order to make Bird Fest bigger and better, we will need even more Audubon support. Please consider making a special effort to volunteer to help set up or staff the Audubon booth on Family Day on May 20, or lead or co-lead a birding trip. Do you have a favorite spring birding spot that you would be willing to share? We welcome your ideas for Bird Fest trips and events for 2023. Please contact Richard Scranton at rscran4350@yahoo.com. Thank you for your support, past, present, and future, of this important conservation and community event.

Wenas Campout June 2-5, 2023. You are invited to a celebration of birds, bats, butterflies, botany, and the beauty of spring in eastern Washington. Each year, Audubon chapters and their friends gather for a few days of camping, birding, and exploring the Wenas Wildlife Area near Ellensburg. In 2023, the campout will be held the first weekend in June, avoiding the crowds of Memorial Day. The casual and friendly gathering offers a variety of activities including birding field trips, wildflower walks, field sketching, and evening campfire presentations. Come for the weekend or a single day. There is no charge to attend and no registration is required. Donations are accepted for organizing costs, including sanitation service. Information on dispersed camping, activities, and what to expect are on the website <https://wenasaudubon.org/>.

Retiring Board Members. Two NCWAS members recently retired from our Board. Teri Peiper served as the newsletter editor for 15 years, and Monica Maxwell has been our social media coordinator since 2019. On behalf of the Board and the birds of north central Washington, thank you for your service!

Walla Walla Point Park/Horan Natural Area Bird Walks. The monthly bird walks in Walla Walla Point Park and the Horan Natural Area are taking a break. Please watch our website (www.ncwaudubon.org) for information about when these walks will resume. You are encouraged to find a time that is convenient for you to walk through the area to see winter birds and enter your sightings into eBird. We apologize for any inconvenience.

"Thanks to Donors" Article Moves from February to April Phlox. Our annual donation appeal is now sent somewhat later in the fall. Accordingly, we've moved the first "thanks to donors" article from the February issue of the Phlox to the April issue. The second "thanks to donors" article (donations made after mid-March) will appear in the October Phlox. Your donations are much appreciated! Please watch for the April Phlox.

National Audubon Society Photography Contest. The National Audubon Society's annual photo contest produces some truly amazing images of birds. We know from past contests hosted by NCWAS that many of our members take photos that rival the national contest winners. Some of our local photographers have had the honor of having one of their images shown as one of the top 100 images submitted to the national contest. How about you? You can read about how to enter the 2023 national contest by visiting <https://www.audubon.org/photoawards-entry>. The deadline for entering is March 1, 2023, at noon Eastern Time. We look forward to seeing your beautiful photos highlighted in the national winner announcement!

Avian Influenza. To learn about bird flu and how to report sick or dead birds visit <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bird-flu>

A Christmas for the Birds

My husband Alan and I enjoyed a different sort of Christmas adventure: we escaped into total isolation over the holiday weekend. Alan, an introvert, enjoyed not having any pressure to socialize, and was wonderful about driving me all over the Waterville Plateau on snow-covered dirt roads. He even said he'd go back anytime. On Christmas Eve we drove to Sun Lakes-Dry Falls State Park, near Coulee City, where we had reserved a two-bedroom unit at the Sun Lakes Park Resort. The entire lake was covered in ice. Aside from Canada Geese resting on the ice, a variety of other birds, and some deer, we were the only "critters" in the entire area. Even the office was closed. The trip was a success in spite of inclement weather. We slept longer than usual, with no commitments and only ourselves to look after. The birding was amazing! Photography was less successful due to pervasive fog, but I had tremendous fun trying!

Christmas Day was full of surprises. The biggest was discovering a virtual village of animals and birds living in a huge mountain of hay bales on a cattle ranch near

Mansfield, where we went to see if we could get above the fog (unsuccessfully). As we approached, we were first drawn to a small herd of deer, then Ring-necked Pheasants, California Quail, Gray Partridges, rabbits, and then a porcupine! We had no idea what we were looking at through the mist: at a distance, it appeared to be the size of a bear cub. It was ambling through the snow, directly toward me, and it wasn't until it was within 30 feet that I was sure it was indeed a porcupine. We watched in amazement as we realized that this enormous mound of hay bales was home to an incredible variety of animals that had burrowed in between bales or dug out caves to create a warm and safe winter home.

It was so foggy on Monday that we decided to head for home and bird along the way. A Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Northern Harrier were in the state park. I felt lucky to see a Merlin and a Belted Kingfisher en route. Rough-legged Hawks seemed to be everywhere. We found Golden Eagles on the hills above Bridgeport and flocks of Horned Larks on the flats.



Gray Partridge

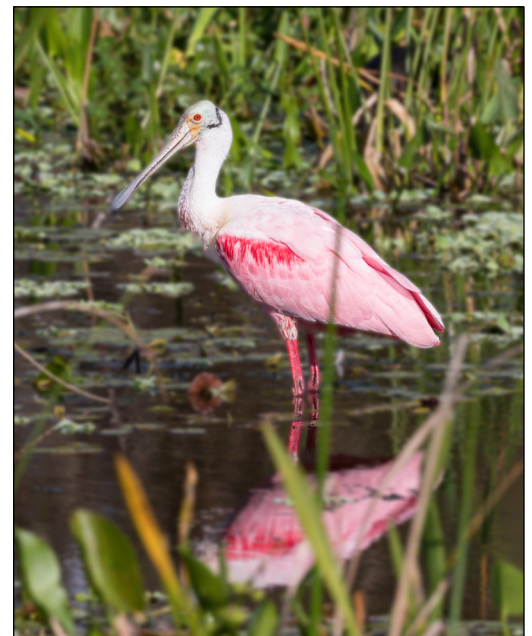
Merritt Island Auto Tour, Florida

When my wife Janet and I left for Florida over the holidays to meet family, we congratulated ourselves on our timing. A cold snap of near-historic proportions was bearing down on the Northwest, and we'd be about as far away as it is possible to get in the continental United States. In addition to the benign temperatures in winter, a major draw for bird photography hobbyists, like ourselves, is that Florida supports a lot of people-adapted charismatic birds. Case-in-point: Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge on the Atlantic Coast.

Established in 1963, and not far from Cape Canaveral, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge boasts one of the best auto tour routes we've ever visited. Trundling along at a blistering 10 miles per hour (when not stopped entirely) we got close-ups of Tricolored and Little Blue Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets, Anhingas, Glossy and White Ibises, with a Reddish Egret thrown in for good measure. But the star of the show, as far as I was concerned, was the Roseate Spoonbill. There are not many places in the United States where a spoonbill will tolerate an eager picture-taker getting out of a car and squatting on the bank for a portrait shot. These proud birds let us get close looks.

Roseate Spoonbills inhabit mostly tropical spaces, with their presence in the United States confined to the Texas Gulf Coast and the southern third of Florida. They forage in shallow water, sweeping their bill back and forth feeling for prey: crustaceans, mostly, but also water beetles and the occasional fish. Their striking color, derived from their diet, makes them a target species for many birders. That certainly describes us!

article and photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop



Roseate Spoonbill

Field Trips!

Winter Birds In and Around Wenatchee

8:00 am-1:00 pm, Saturday February 25

Meet trip leaders Richard Scranton and Mark Johnston at the East Penny Street Park and Ride in Wenatchee at 8:00 am (day of trip phone number 253-297-0705). With the birds that spend the winter with us still present, we'll spend the morning searching a variety of spots that should produce a nice mix of waterfowl, passerines, and hopefully raptors. Bring snacks, liquids, good footwear, and dress for the weather. Expect to walk two miles or so over uneven ground. To sign up, email Mark at toxostoma495@gmail.com. Limited to 10 participants.

East Wenatchee Porter's Pond

8:00-10:00 am, Saturday March 4

Join Joe Veverka and Tucker Jonas for a couple of hours of birding at Porter's Pond in East Wenatchee. We will meet at the Apple Capitol Loop Trail-19th Street Trailhead (<https://goo.gl/maps/jifHKGoFYi58QiNd6>) at 8:00 am and walk along the Loop Trail and side trails looking for waterfowl and grebes on the river. We expect to find several species of waterfowl as well as wintering sparrows and perhaps even some early arriving Violet-green Swallows. Walking should be fairly easy, not exceeding two miles at a birder's pace. Bring binoculars, good shoes or boots, plenty of water, and snacks. Don't forget a camera. All skill levels are welcome and no preregistration is required. If you have any questions email Joe Veverka at joe_veverka@yahoo.com.

Christmas Bird Count Reports - continued from page 1

The Okanogan is raptor country and harsh conditions don't stop them. Our count included 105 Bald Eagles, 4 Golden Eagles, 49 Red-tailed Hawks, 3 Rough-legged Hawks, 6 Cooper's Hawks, 4 Merlins, and 4 Great Horned Owls. Kestrels and shrikes were out and about, and notably Trumpeter Swans and an American Dipper were enjoying the river in downtown Omak (along with a crew of otters). A large contingent of Barrow's Goldeneyes were bobbing in Omak Lake, accompanied by Buffleheads, an Eared Grebe, and mergansers. Pishing whispered in the trifecta of nuthatch species from a flock. And not to be outdone, an Anna's Hummingbird showed off its hardiness at a local feeder. All in all, it was a fun and memorable day of birding.

Twisp, reported by Peter Wimberger

The 35th annual Twisp Christmas Bird Count took place on December 30 under a coat of 4 to 8 inches of new snow on top of the piles already on the ground. Our hearty crew met in the morning at the Cinnamon Twisp Bakery (thanks!) to caffeinate and receive final instructions. We had light snow, clouds, and even a few sun breaks during the calm day. The snow cover seemed to keep the bird diversity low, but between the 56 observers and 9 feeder watchers we still managed to see 68 species on count day, slightly below the recent average but good for a day with so much snow cover. We added four additional species during count week including a Ruddy Duck, new for our count. A few other highlights for the count were Canada Jay, American Coot, American Tree Sparrow, Horned Lark, and low elevation Clark's Nutcrackers. We saw over 5,000 birds, which was on the high end for the count. We had record high numbers for some "feeder birds" including House Finches (886 versus the previous high of 598), Black-capped Chickadees, Spotted Towhees, Steller's Jays, and Cooper's Hawks and near-highs for Dark-eyed Juncos, House Sparrows, and American

Goldfinches. These species made up 50 percent of the birds seen this year (also a count high). We had a few notable misses including Pygmy Owls, American Kestrels, Pine Grosbeaks, and Evening Grosbeaks. A few participants gathered at Big Twin Lake for "Sip and Duck" to watch the ducks fly-in at dusk—nearly 500 waterfowl of nine species descended on the bubbler hole. Sadly, at least 20 dead ducks were floating on Big Twin, likely victims of avian flu. Avian flu has not been detected in Okanogan County yet; we notified Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife officials and hopefully they are monitoring the situation. A few of us finished the day at the delicious after-count potluck dinner kindly hosted by co-compiler Jen Walsh Fisher.

Wenatchee, reported by Dan Stephens

The 62nd Wenatchee Christmas Bird Count was conducted on December 30 in sun breaks, drifting fog banks, snow flurries, and over a foot of snow on the ground in the valleys. Twenty-three of us covered all 11 areas. Our total number of species was 75, which was the lowest since 1985. Our total number of individuals was 6,902, also the lowest since 1985. We set two species-specific records. We counted the all-time highest number of Red-tailed Hawks at 97, which eclipsed 85 set in 2012. We also counted the all-time highest number of Common Ravens at 106, surpassing the 2018 record of 86. We met for an after-count compilation party and feast at Bonnie Orr's house. It was heart-warming to meet again after the pandemic with great birders and wonderful friends.

(Editor's Note: Count week is defined as the three days before and after the official count day and is a list of species not observed on count day. Although count week species are not added to the number of species or number of birds observed on count day, they provide information about species that might be observed during future counts.)

The North Central Washington Hummingbird Project

by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

NCWAS hosts a community-science hummingbird survey four times each year. Volunteers for the surveys commit to giving an hour of their time on the solstice or equinox date. The survey hour is centered around sunrise or sunset time. During the survey period, volunteers watch their gardens or feeders and record which hummingbird species they see. Their information is shared through eBird to provide data for ongoing research and education. Since December of 2021, we have collected surveys from 150 people (many participate in more than one survey) that have documented 92 hummingbirds. You can find information about the survey and how to join by visiting the NCWAS website (<https://ncwaudubon.org/hummingbirds/>).

Four hummingbird species visit north central Washington. The Rufous, Black-chinned, and Calliope visit us each summer and migrate south when their biological programming tells them it is time to go. Anna's Hummingbirds are here year round. The Rufous Hummingbird is the only one of the four that is classified as "near threatened" due to continued loss of habitat.

When I talk to many people about hummingbirds, I hear words like "curious," "mesmerized," and "fascinating" in the conversations. Nobody places hummingbirds into "ho-hum" or "whatever" categories. The wee birds inspire and entertain us. Our garden plants and feeders provide the opportunity to watch and wonder about them. For many, this is enough. Others ponder many questions for which we simply do not have answers.

We know so little about where the birds go or how they get by each day. Do they head to the same locations each year? Do they find different food sources as they move around? Are those food sources changing as the planet warms? What is the nesting success rate for each species? These questions are hard to answer, in large part because of their small size and the challenges that banding and recovering hummingbirds present. New technologies may allow us to put dinky sensors on hummingbirds to track them and avoid the need to recapture them to retrieve data. Some members of the NCWAS board are very interested in these technologies for hummingbirds and other species. I hope we can find a way to design and fund a small program to provide much needed information.

Only the Anna's Hummingbird remains with us during the cold, winter months. It is well established that use of artificial feeders and garden plants supports and allows the bird to expand its range to the north and east. While this successful expansion is cause for joy, it also presents seasonal challenges that can be very difficult for us. Each

year, around November, I get questions about winter feeding of Anna's. The easiest question to answer is "will my feeder prevent them from migrating?" The answer, as published by Audubon and respected authorities, is no. Your feeders do not keep the birds from migrating.

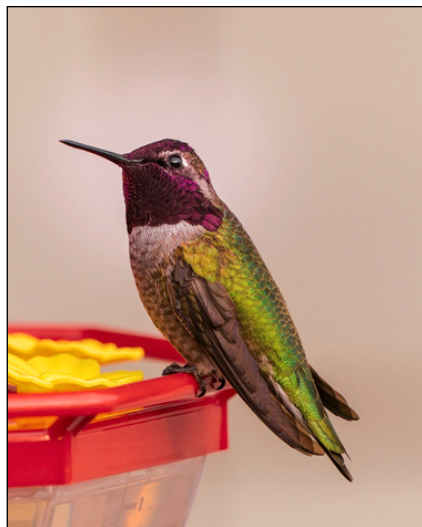
Harder questions come during and after a deep cold spell or prolonged period of snow and ice. How can the birds survive such weather? Like most of biology, it's complicated. We don't know many of the answers. We do know that hummingbirds require protein as much or more than nectar. Where do they find bugs, spiders, and other protein sources in January? While we don't have local research to lean on for answers, we can begin to

extrapolate what is known to our local situation and species. Hummingbirds are known to extract fruit fly larvae from apples in sub-freezing temperatures in December in Pennsylvania (S. Weidensaul, *A World on the Wing*, 2021). Golden-crowned Kinglets, just slightly larger than an Anna's Hummingbird, find plentiful, nearly invisible caterpillars in Maine at -30 degrees Centigrade (-22 Fahrenheit) (B. Heinrich, *Winter World*, 2003). It seems that there may be protein sources on our trees and shrubs that we don't see or know about. Again, there are many questions that beg for answers.

The NCWAS survey shows that after a serious cold snap, many (or most) hummingbirds disappear. People ask, "what happened; where did my birds go?" The truth is, we don't know. It could be that the birds perished. It could also be that they decided that they'd had

enough and flew to a more hospitable location. I monitor several Facebook hummingbird groups and see reports of "more birds than ever before" in the Seattle/Tacoma area while I am receiving reports that "my birds are gone." Could it be that our local birds headed across the Cascades to the relatively warm Puget Sound area? Coincidence? Survival response? Again, we don't know.

I will close with an opinion. I know that Anna's Hummingbirds are in central Washington all year now, with or without feeders. I believe that providing liquid nectar in heated feeders during winter may help them survive during the tough periods. Like others, I worry when "my" birds disappear after a cold snap. However, I keep providing fresh nectar and cleaning my heated feeder. I adjust the heater's lightbulb wattage as temperatures vary. I watch for any sign that they made it through the extreme conditions. Until I can find a way to offer safe protein sources as well as nectar, I'll rely on my heated feeder to help the birds along. As the saying goes, "I'll leave a light on."



Anna's Hummingbird photo by Frank Cone (used with permission)

Mallards (AKA “Fish Dogs”)

This is a bit of inquiry as to how many birders are aware of the symbiotic relationship between Great Blue Herons and Mallards when it comes to a heron’s fish-feeding time?

After observing a couple of herons over time at the Columbia River, I have noticed that when it is time to have a fish snack, a heron will join up where Mallards are dabbling along the shallower shoreline areas of the river.

Numerous times I have seen herons position themselves where Mallards are actively dabbling for aquatic plants, or right among the Mallards as they are dabbling about, and I have seen proof that the herons are taking advantage of the small species of fish the Mallards “flush” out when they are “butts-up” and feeding on aquatic plants. I have come to regard the Mallards as “fish dogs,” as they indeed are flushing out fish for the herons, although perhaps not

knowingly. But the more I learn about wildlife from long observations, I think it is possible that the Mallards know they are doing the herons a favor. Perhaps in return, the Mallards get an early warning from the herons when danger approaches, as the herons will take off with a loud squawk when something disturbs them.



article and photo by Robert Strand, East Wenatchee

The photo is of a heron I watched fly from its perch, glide along the shoreline, and land in a shallow area where Mallards were actively dabbling. From previous observations, I knew why the heron landed there, and although my view was somewhat obstructed by vegetation, I was able to document the “fish dog” activity with my camera. The heron actively started fishing along the

shoreline near the Mallards, and I was surprised by how consistently it could catch fish less than two inches long at the tip of its beak, and then flip them back to reposition the “snack” nearer its throat.

In the same area, I also have observed Belted Kingfishers perched in a tree or bush along the shallower shoreline of the river and dive right into a group of dabbling Mallards or American Widgeons for fish they have flushed out.

(Editor’s Note: If you have observed this “fish dog” activity of Mallards or other species of dabbling ducks flushing small fish for herons or kingfishers, please email your observations to me at jahovis711@gmail.com and I will forward them to the author.)

Searching for Cranes at Whitewater Draw

by Susan Sampson, Wenatchee

Locked indoors by smoke from wildfires and then facing a snowbound winter, my husband insisted that we spend the winter in southern Arizona. When I told my Wenatchee birding friends of my travel plans, they recommended birding sites to visit when I got there. They mentioned Ash Canyon, Ramsey Canyon, and Madera Canyon, but nobody mentioned Whitewater Draw. However, a man at Ash Canyon said that Sandhill Cranes would be in residence there for the winter.

I suppose we could have Googled the site to confirm that it offered good birding, but instead, we went straight to choosing our route. Whitewater Draw is in the far southeastern part of Arizona. Our route took us through vast flat land studded with mesquite shrubs and surrounded by distant mountains. We saw no structures or traffic for miles. I thought what a dirty trick it would be to send us “way out here” for nothing. Jerry wondered how water birds could find such a site. I wondered how people could find the birds there. Eventually we turned off the highway onto Coffman Road. It was a reddish dirt and gravel washboard track. The GPS told us to proceed for 3.5 miles. We crept along at 22 miles per hour. Just past the 3-mile mark, we saw a house and wondered if that was it, but a sign on its gate was printed with an arrow—keep going. And then, there it was.

The Whitewater Draw contained a series of wide, shallow

ponds with reeds at the edges and clumps of grass poking up on islands offshore. It looked much like the vernal ponds in Douglas County near home. I walked atop a mud berm between the ponds and saw a flock of Northern Shovelers and another of Northern Pintails in their typical pose, head down, butts up. Across the pond I saw a flotilla of white Snow Geese, just like we’d see at Moses Lake. I’d been to Othello looking for Sandhill Cranes, but missed them. Now I wondered if I’d miss them again.

Eventually I turned to walk back to my car, passing two women sitting on a bench watching for birds. I didn’t intend to eavesdrop, but one was loud. She was saying that since her cataract surgery, with her binoculars, she could see lines of birds coming from high up and far out. Well, I’ve had my eyes done too, so I studied the sky with my binoculars, and then I, too, saw line after line of cranes flying toward us. As I watched, they dropped low and came in fast and landed on the shore close to me. There were thousands and thousands of them.

Another birder explained that the birds leave to feed on grain midday, then return to the ponds at night. It was still midday when I saw them, butting up against one another, covering a field like a wall-to-wall carpet of big birds, feathered stylishly in gray and sporting little red caps. A pamphlet said that more than 20,000 of them winter at this very site.

February 2023 Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Resources and Calendar

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February 24	Wenatchee Winter Birds Field Trip	See page 5 for more information
February 8 March 8	Beginner Bird Walk Wenatchee River Institute	www.wenatcheeriverinstitute.org
February 17-20	Winter Wings Bird Festival	Klamath Falls, Oregon www.winterwingsfest.org
February 17-20	Great Backyard Bird Count	https://www.birdcount.org/
March 4	East Wenatchee Porter's Pond Field Trip	See page 5 for more information
March 24-26	Othella Sandhill Crane Festival	www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org/
April 6	Hummingbird Presentation	Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center See page 3 for more information
April 13	Marina Richie Nature Writing Workshop and Red Barn Event	Wenatchee River Institute See page 3 for more information



You can find the Wild Phlox online at our website - www.ncwaudubon.org
The beautiful photos are even nicer in color.



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