

The Wild Phlox

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Connecting People with Nature since 1966



Artwork © 2018 Heather A. Wallis Murphy

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Terminus: A Memorial to the Glaciers of Olympic National Park

submitted by Heather Wallis Murphy, Leavenworth

Terminus is an artistic elegy to a changing planet. Between 1982 and 2009, the number of glaciers in the Olympic Mountains shrank from 266 to 184. We know that number will dwindle further as the climate continues to change. The goal of the Terminus project is to immortalize the glaciers of the Olympic Mountains through art. Forty Artists-In-Residence created an original art work as a tribute to their assigned glacier. Art forms included painting, photography, poems, essays, weavings, block prints, music, sculpture, videography, and graphic stories. As these glaciers melt away, these works of art will live on as a reminder that these glaciers were meaningful, and are still meaningful.

North Central Washington participating artists include Claire Waichler of Mazama (a glacier/climate change artist), Claire Seaman of Leavenworth (a climate change painter), Hanna Geise of Leavenworth and Utah (a writer), and Heather Wallis Murphy of Leavenworth (a wildlife biologist, nature journalist, and watercolorist).

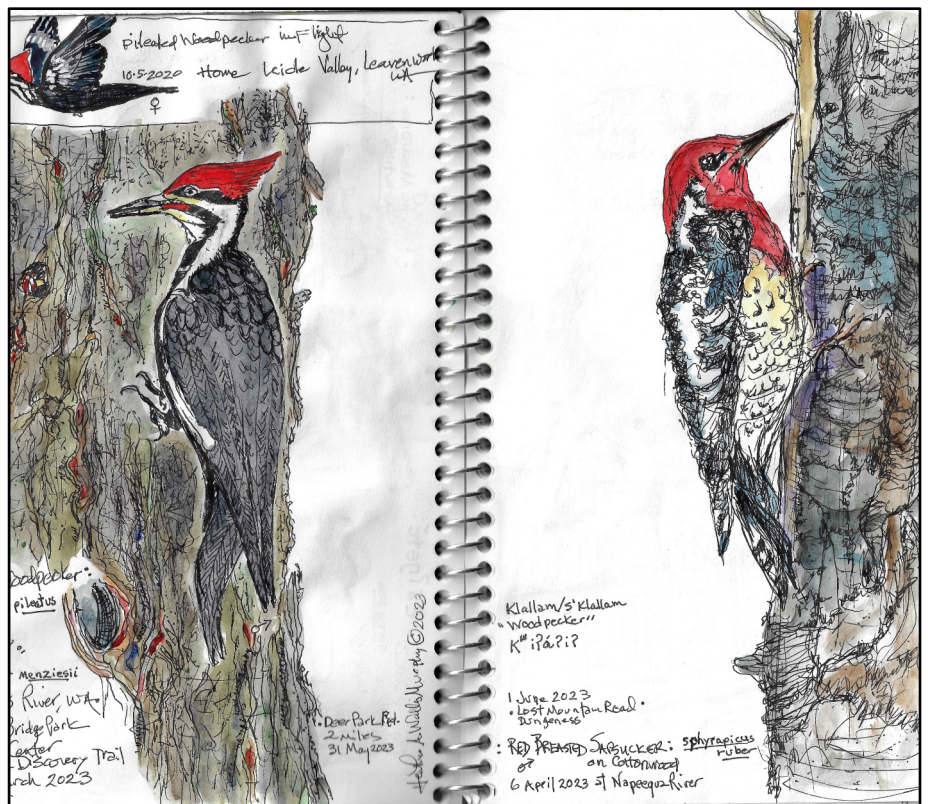
The project is sponsored by Olympic National Park and Discover Your Northwest. The completed works of art will be exhibited at the Port Angeles Fine Arts Center from July 7 through September 3, 2023, with an opening reception on July 7 from 5:00-7:00 pm. The Fine Arts Center is located at 1203 East Lauridsen Boulevard in Port Angeles.

For more information visit <https://www.nps.gov/olymp/terminus.htm> and <https://pafac.org/gallery-exhibits/terminus/>.

An Excerpt from Heather Wallis Murphy's Terminus Essays and Journal Pages

Subalpine and Alpine Habitats and Hurricane Ridge - the snowy March 2023 weather opened, we got to peek into my assigned Deception Glacier. It is at the head of the Gray Wolf and Dungeness Rivers. The high mountains will be affected by warmer winters with less snow depth, glaciers will not be "growing." There is now more rain than snow. Summers are now warmer melting the snowpack sooner, affecting the plants and animals that need colder environs. There is no higher elevation "thermal refugia" for movement of species requiring cool summer growing seasons, which have been growing along the glaciers and snowfields.

Pileated Woodpecker and Red-breasted Sapsucker - affected birds of the forests as the microclimate begins to dry along the rivers and streams, advancing into the deep forests. Less insects and mosses and sap producing plants with dryer summers.



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”

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

PayPal Donations Will No Longer be Accepted

One of the guiding principles that the NCWAS board relies on is to use the money generously donated to us in cost effective ways that support our conservation and education mission.

Effective July 1, 2023, NCWAS will no longer accept donations via PayPal. We are no longer willing to incur the fees that PayPal assesses or the additional administrative effort needed to transfer and account for money donated through PayPal. Also, PayPal donations do not provide personal mailing information that we need to maintain our membership roster.

Anyone who donates to NCWAS by writing a check is automatically enrolled as a member. We will also continue to recognize that any member in good standing in the National Audubon Society who lives in our four-county area will automatically be enrolled in the NCWAS membership.

We apologize for any inconvenience this transition may create.

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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



By all accounts, the 2023 Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest was a great success! Unfortunately, I was not able to attend Dr. Marzluff's keynote address in person as I had planned. (Despite all precautions, I caught Covid in early May and was still testing positive.) But I was able to attend via Zoom and I really enjoyed his presentation. You can read Susan Sampson's article about Marzluff's keynote address on Page 5 of this issue, and visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsaRVqsBqi0> to watch a recording of the entire presentation. Speaking of Susan Sampson, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge her many contributions to this newsletter. Since I took on the editorship in October 2021, she has been a faithful contributor, whether it be a write-up about a recent NCWAS event or a review of an interesting book she has read. Thank you Susan!



Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest Bird Watchers
photo by Karen Haire, Leavenworth

Having Covid definitely limited my ability to get out for bird walks, but there have been some interesting bird-related happenings in my own backyard. For the first time, a pair of Western Bluebirds are nesting in one of my bird houses. All six eggs hatched and the young are about a week away from taking their first flight. My other three boxes are occupied by swallows—two with Tree Swallows and one with Violet-greens. All the swallow nests have hatched but they are further behind than the bluebirds. I monitor my nest boxes weekly and report the data to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch program. NestWatch is a monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds. It's easy to participate and the data are for a good cause. To learn more visit <https://nestwatch.org/about/overview/>. Also, I believe a pair of Lazuli Buntings are nesting in or near my yard (another first). I see and hear the male daily but have not been able to find the nest.

Meet Our Newest Board Member: Dj Jones

I grew up in Oregon and as a young adult, I backpacked the Pacific Crest Trail from Manning Park to Cutthroat Pass. I never imagined then that the Methow Valley would become my home! Trip leaders from my summer camp days and my parents awakened a love of the natural world around me that has only grown stronger.

I studied biology at Lewis and Clark College in Portland and attended summer sessions at the Malheur Field Station, expanding my interest in birds and plants. My career was spent as a business owner, designing and installing perennial gardens and seasonal containers for residential and houseboat clients in the greater Seattle area.

Living in the Methow Valley with my wife Sharon and our inside cat, Asha, brings me great joy. We are active hikers, bikers, and cross-country skiers, when not birding.

While in Puget Sound, I participated in birding trips offered by several local Audubon chapters and was fortunate to be a part of Seattle Audubon's Master Birder Class taught by Dennis Paulson.

I'm looking forward to joining Karen Haire on the field trip committee and would like to thank Janet Bauer for her years of service as the field trip chair.



photo by Sharon Cupp, Mazama

21 Years of the Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest

by Rande Zerger, Wenatchee River Institute

The 21st annual Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest, organized by the Wenatchee River Institute and NCWAS, may have been the biggest yet. Over the four-day weekend in May, there were over 50 birding trips around North Central Washington. That doesn't even include the several beginner birding trips that happened the week leading up to Bird Fest. The festival was a big success with more trips, more participants, and more diversity. Some new trips included Chelan Coulees Preserve and Spiva Butte Preserve, which were both a hit!

Alongside birding trips, there was Family Day, the Bird Fest Social, Birders' BBQ, and the Keynote Address with Dr. John Marzluff. Family Day made another return and was bigger than last year. There was live music, 15 vendor

booths, multiple activities for youth and adults, and even live raptors from the Washington Falconer's Association. Finally, over 100 people attended the Keynote Address in-person and online. We were excited to welcome Dr. John Marzluff to speak about his work detailing the intertwined lives of ravens, wolves, pumas, and the people that visit and live around Yellowstone.

We hope you can join us for next year's Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest from May 16-19, 2024!

P.S. Have any feedback you'd like to share? There will be a survey emailed to participants and volunteers soon. Check your email! We appreciate your feedback to continue making Bird Fest better each year.

Thank You 2023 Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest Volunteers!

Our three 2023 Founders' Award recipients, Dan Stephens, Janet Millard, and Gail Roberts, deserve special recognition. These individuals have played a special role in Bird Fest over the years. The festival would not be the same without their years of dedication, service, and passion for birds and the natural world. Thank you!

NCWAS and the Wenatchee River Institute are very fortunate to have so many people willing to volunteer their time and expertise to make the Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest the best that it can be for our participants. Thank you for your hard work and dedication! (If you volunteered and your name is not on this list, we sincerely apologize. Please let us know!)

Tim Abel	Bob Doolittle	Virginia Kraft	Steve Rutherford
Mel Asher	Betsy Dudash	Emily Larson	Susan Sampson
Mary Austin	Johnna Eilers	Jill LaRue	Linda Sarratt
Lauren Ballinger	Polly Feehan	Lisa Lawless	Don Schaechtel
Susan Ballinger	Ann Fink	Holly Leach	Richard Scranton
Marcy Bartelheimer	Mary Gallagher	Tom Leach	Wendy Sharp
Janet Bauer	Tim Gallagher	Elisa Lopez	Derek Sheffield
Peter Bauer	Paul Gustie	Gary Luhm	Nicole Shepherd
Denise Bayuszik	Karen Haire	Cindy Luskus	Sarah Smith
Martha Bean	Eileen Hambleton	Amy Massey	Paul Sozio
Jeremy Bemis	Jeff Hambleton	Bruce McCammon	Betsy Steele
Rachel Bishop	Julia Hansborough	Connie McCauley	Susie Stenkamp
Daniel Bobadilla	Ashley Harrod	Maggie McManus	Dan Stephens
Jon Bobadilla	Alex Harwell	Matt Megaard	Willy Stockman
Carol Cade	Jaana Hatton	Janet Millard	Dan Streiffert
Grace Camp	Neal Hedges	Heather Moravec	Tiffany Theden
Nolan Campbell	Shanda Holm	Clare Morrison	Larry Tobiska
Neilsen Christi	Catherine Houser	Jack Mynatt	Penny Tobiska
Linda Christianson	Audrey Huerta	Mark Oswood	Monica Valle
Vicky Cibicki	Mark Ingman	Lisi Ott	Joe Veverka
Claudia Cockerham	Emily Jeffreys	Neil Paprocki	Matt Yawney
Ann Colley	Mark Johnston	Amy Pavlochek	Don Youkey
Eric Crockett	Tucker Jonas	John Place	Jane Zanol
Tara deArrieta	Annette Jouard	Diane Priebe	John Zanol
Sherri Doolittle	Natalie Kahler	Merry Roy	

What Dr. Marzluff Said

by Susan Sampson, Wenatchee

John Marzluff, Ph.D. delivered the keynote address at the Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest this year. He is a 65-year-old Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington and a prolific writer; he has written six books and over 175 research papers. For his keynote address, Marzluff talked about Common Ravens and shared some results of his recent research on the interactions of ravens and wolves in Yellowstone National Park.

Unlike many other species, Common Ravens are not rare, endangered, or even threatened. Rather, because they are able to adapt to human environments, their numbers are increasing. They form life-long pair bonds, and adults will cache their food and try to keep the locations secret. But vagrant non-breeders that roost with the adults will follow them to the cached food, and when the adults try to chase them away, the noise results in more ravens finding and stealing part of the food.

To study Common Ravens at Yellowstone, Marzluff and his colleagues fitted birds with transmitters that recharge with solar energy. The transmitters are fixed to the birds permanently and weigh about three percent of the bird's weight—but some ravens have learned to peel them off one another. Yellowstone ravens show a strong reliance on natural foods when the seasons allow, but will also use anthropogenic sources. They forage in garbage dumps, beg for hand-outs from tourists, and thrive at waste-water treatment plants where they skim the energy-rich fat off the water. In winter, their most common natural food is insects in bison droppings. One cow-plop can offer a handful of maggots.

Breeding ravens stay “home” until their chicks fledge, then feed the chicks for another month before ousting them. The parents then change their daily foraging range from 5 to 57 miles each way.

Ravens can fly 30 miles per hour and find a kill 100 miles away. They will steal food from wolves, and when ravens find a kill, wolves are able to find it within two or three days.

While Ravens co-evolve with humans, Snowy Plovers, Greater Sage-Grouse, and Desert Tortoises are threatened with extinction due to habitat loss. As they become concentrated in smaller areas, ravens find and prey on them. The U.S. government kills thousands of ravens annually, but their numbers are still increasing and the killing isn't protecting the endangered animals. Ravens could be taught to avoid endangered species with aversion therapy, such as using a tortoise decoy that explodes when grabbed.

And the Winning Photograph Is...

by Susan Sampson, Wenatchee

NCWAS brought a beautiful photography show to the Leavenworth Bird Fest in May. We borrowed eleven enlarged photos from the National Audubon Society, each a winner in the 2022 edition of its annual photography contest. We took a straw poll of the 113 visitors to our show to see if they agreed with the national judges. I'll tell you our results, but first, look at the winning photos by searching for “The 2022 Audubon Photography Awards: Winners and Honorable Mentions” on the internet.

The national judges chose White-tailed Kites as the Grand Prize Winner. Our audience gave it 16 votes. Our hands-down winner was a photo of a female Western Grebe floating in the water with two chicks riding on her back, each reaching around her neck to grab an end of the fish she holds in her beak. Thirty visitors named it as their favorite. The photo was the Amateur Award Winner in the national contest.



Common Raven
photo by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley

NCWAS Does Earth Day

by Susan Sampson, Wenatchee

Busloads of kids arrived at the Chief Joseph Dam at Bridgeport for Earth Day events on April 20. NCWAS was waiting for 90 of them with “What’s That Bird,” our scavenger hunt for bird replicas staged in nearby trees. The groups of mostly fourth and fifth graders had 30 minutes to learn about field marks, try using binoculars, locate the birds, identify them from field guides, and check them off a list of birds one might see in the local area.

One student demonstrated her unbelievable ability to make realistic bird calls, from cooing to whistling. Another took special note of the name of *The Sibley Guide to Birds* book at our station so she could get one. She is already determined to become a biologist, so of course she got encouraging words from Mark Oswood, biology professor emeritus.

Seriously, I calculate the average age of Audubon members who worked the event to be 75. They were Mark Oswood, Judy Oswood, Meredith Spencer, and Sue Sampson. In the interest of succession planning, we need to have some younger people become involved. Anybody interested should talk to Mark Oswood, or drop by our station at the Wenatchee River Salmon Fest on September 21-23, 2023, at the Rocky Reach Dam.

A Spotted Goose Story

article and photo by Teri J. Pieper, Methow Valley



I first saw this spotted Canada Goose last fall in the Okanogan Highlands. The bird's striking plumage really stood out. When I returned to the same area in May, I saw it again. Well, I think it was the same bird. Geese, like other waterfowl, molt in the late summer after breeding season so assuming it's the same bird, it's wearing the same feathers it had in October. The lakes in that area freeze solid so it had to have migrated for the winter.

I had forgotten about it until I saw it again this spring and I was struck by its beauty. It was hanging out with a small group of Canada Geese, none of which seemed to be on nests. I felt like it was slightly smaller than the others but without having the birds in hand, that's impossible to confirm. I hope to see it again this fall or next spring because I wonder what it will look like after it molts.

This condition is known as leucism. According to www.avianreport.com, leucism is "a genetic mutation that results in a total or partial reduction of color in a bird's plumage. The reduction of color in the bird's plumage is due to an inadequate deposition or fixation of pigments only in the bird's feathers. Other parts of the bird's body have normal coloration." It also goes on to say that the amount of white may increase or decrease over time as the bird goes through its annual molt cycle.

As I was googling for images of leucistic birds, I came across a pigeon that had similar markings to this goose but all over its body. You never know what you will find when you are looking for birds.

Methow Nature Notes

by David Lukas, Methow Valley

If you love the natural world, you probably love to follow the changing seasons, and there's a fantastic new resource based in the Methow Valley. Over the last couple years there has been a Facebook group called Methow Nature Notes, where over 1,900 people post photos, observations, and questions every day about the plants and animals they're seeing in and around the Methow Valley. But there are a lot of people who don't like or use Facebook, so I recently started the Methow Nature Notes newsletter as a way to include everyone in the conversation.

Methow Nature Notes (www.methownaturenotes.com) is both a website and a weekly newsletter that is sent as an email every Saturday. The newsletter summarizes and discusses the highlights of the week, along with beautiful photos of what was observed in the natural world that week. The newsletter is a fantastic resource because it's succinctly curated and permanent, rather than being a scrolling feed on a Facebook page. It's free, plus it's easy to subscribe or unsubscribe at any time, so I think you'd enjoy following along.



Yellow-headed Blackbird
photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

Book Review

by Susan Sampson, Wenatchee

***Alaska, the Harriman Expedition, 1899.* By John Burroughs, John Muir, et al (Doubleday, New York, 1901 [original]; Dover Publications, Inc., New York 1986 [reprint, two volumes in one]).**

An expedition can generate a great travelogue. Consider Caesar's *Conquest of Gaul*, or *The Voyages of Captain Cook* and *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*. Somehow, until now, I had missed the Harriman expedition of 1899.

In 1899, the railroad magnate Edward Henry Harriman chartered a steamship to take himself and his family on a cruise up the coast of Alaska as far as the Bering Strait. Realizing he had room to spare, he invited along twenty-five scientists, hunters, photographers, stenographers, and artists—including Louis Agassiz Fuertes, the illustrator for the Audubon Society. The scientists included John Burroughs, the ornithologist for whom the Burroughs Medal in nature writing is named, and author John Muir, noted for his passion for Yosemite and the Sierra Nevadas.

John Burroughs wrote the overview narrative for the expedition and others contributed essays focusing on their own fields. Fortunately for the project, Burroughs wrote clearly and gracefully, and being an ornithologist, made special mention of the birds he saw along the way. They encountered so many birds that other scientists made mention of them while writing about their own fields. One wrote about seeing so many murrets that when a shot startled them, they rose in a cloud so big that it blacked out the sky.

Steaming under power, bearing photographers, the project doesn't seem like it was terribly long ago. My grandparents were twenty-year olds that year. Still, some aspects of the trip seem primitive. They carried a "milk cow" for milk during the trip, and she survived, but they ate the other livestock they carried. They sailed among the Aleutian Islands, but their maps were imprecise and the

fog was heavy, so finding their destination was no sure thing. Even the borders of Alaska were not defined. The United States and Canada agreed that their border would be whatever it was that the Russians had sold to the United States, wherever that may be.

Some of the science they explored was new to them. The meteorologist recounted the new discovery that particulate matter caused diffusion of light, leading to color in the sky.

The volcanos they encountered were fresh. One was seventeen years old and the other, only seven. They observed murrets nesting on volcano-warmed rocks, but observed that murrets that flew through the sulfurous clouds emitting from the volcanos dropped dead on the spot.

Even 123 years ago, the scientists on board were concerned for the environmental destruction they saw. They mentioned the overhunting of blue foxes, fur seals, and bears, and the overfishing of salmon.

Muir, as it happened, was their expert on glaciers. He had measured the glaciers twenty years earlier, and this trip, documented their significant recession.

Prime authors Burroughs and Muir, and the others, had learned their crafts during the Victorian era. True to their times, they were expected to write descriptively for readers who had no alternative resources to look to (and in the case of Alaska, resources were scant). Their writing tended to be more poetic than contemporary nonfiction. "The sail down the coast from St. Elias along the magnificent Fairweather Range, where every mountain stood transfigured in divine light, was the crowning grace and glory of the trip and must be immortal in the remembrance of every soul of us," Muir wrote. The book is an enjoyable classic travelogue.

Libraries Are For The Birds

by Clare Morrison, Peshastin

The Leavenworth, Peshastin, and Cashmere libraries are very grateful to NCWAS for their support of bird-related activities at our libraries this spring! The lender binoculars and bird posters provided children, teen, and adult visitors with engaging opportunities to gain birding skills and explore the world around us. We set up bird-watching stations at each library where visitors could learn how to use binoculars and learn about local birds. We also set up a bird silhouette ID challenge.

In addition to the bird-watching stations, the Leavenworth Library hosted a migration-themed bird fest art show with artists ranging in age from two-years-old to adults. And at the Peshastin Library, we hosted our second annual Earth Day bird walk led by NCWAS members Tucker Jonas, Greg Harris, and Judy Huett-Harris with six participants from a variety of ages and backgrounds. One participant, a visitor from Croatia, told us she was inspired to spearhead a birding trip for her own community when she returns home.



photo by Susan Ballinger, Wenatchee

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Resources and Calendar

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Jul 12, Aug 9	Birding by the River Wenatchee River Institute	www.wenatcheeriverinstitute.org
Apr 26	Wenatchee Birding Wenatchee River Institute	www.wenatcheeriverinstitute.org
2nd Wednesday of the Month	Bebee Springs Bird Surveys	Contact Virginia Palumbo vwpalumbo@gmail.com or 509-682-5969
Monitor Bird Nests	Contribute to Community-Based Science	https://nestwatch.org/about/overview/
Virtual Birding	Nest Cameras	https://allaboutbirds.org/cams/



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