



The Wild Phlox

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Don't Turn Back the Clock by Repealing the 2001 Roadless Rule

by Arthur Campbell, NCWAS President

Editor's Note: This article originally was published as an opinion piece in the Wenatchee World newspaper on September 5, 2026. Since then, the deadline for submitting comments has been extended until October 6, 2026. If you would like to weigh in on this important issue, you can submit comments online through <https://www.regulations.gov> under docket number FS-2025-0001-343438 (or RIN 0596-AD66). You also can use National Audubon's Action Center to comment by visiting <https://act.audubon.org/a/save-roadless-areas-2026>.

The 2001 National Forest Roadless Area Conservation Rule was visionary when it was established. Twenty-five years later it feels more like common sense.

In the 1990s, fiscal conservatives made a compelling point. They questioned the financial wisdom of expanding the existing Forest Service network of roads into remaining road-free lands. For context, the Forest Service currently has 370,000 miles of Forest Service system roads, which is nearly eight times the size of the U.S. interstate highway system. And the current maintenance backlog on those roads is estimated by the agency to be between \$8 billion and \$10 billion.

In 1999, the Forest Service moved forward with an extensive two-year public rulemaking process. It included holding 400 public meetings nationwide, more than 20 of them distributed throughout Washington State, during a 120-day comment period. In all, 1.6 million public comments (95% of which were in support of the Rule) were submitted as part of what was, at the time, the largest federal rulemaking process in the history of the federal government. The Roadless Rule was finalized in January of 2001 and currently protects about a third of our national forests from new road building.

Despite the thorough process, support, and balance that went into the Roadless Rule when it was established, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is now pushing to repeal it.

Last fall, during the initial comment period, more than 600,000 comments were submitted, and 99% of them opposed repeal. However, no public hearings were held then, and none are scheduled for the current comment period which is only 30 days long.

Roadless areas protect some of the most important areas on our national forests. If the Roadless Rule is repealed, the following values and benefits will be at risk:

Safe and Clean Drinking Water—National Forests contain the headwaters of our great rivers which are the largest source of municipal water supply in the nation, serving over 60 million people in 3,400 communities in 33 states. This includes the City of Leavenworth, which gets its water from Icicle Creek. This creek is partially fed by roadless areas adjacent to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

Wildlife Habitat—In Washington State, 25 at-risk species, including Bald Eagles, steelhead, bull trout, and Chinook salmon are found in national forests. Most of the unspoiled habitat for numerous threatened, endangered, and declining species is found in roadless areas. Here in Chelan County, much of our remaining old-growth forest is found in roadless areas providing key habitat for birds like Northern Spotted Owl, Boreal Owl, American Goshawk, and mammals such as pine marten and fisher.

Recreational Opportunities—Forests currently protected by the Roadless Rule offer abundant outdoor recreation opportunities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and other cherished activities. Every year, millions of people take advantage of free, or very affordable, access to these public lands. In Washington State, nearly 2 million acres of currently roadless forests are at stake. The proposed repeal would potentially put at risk 830 national forest trails in Washington totaling more than 4,000 miles of trails. A few examples include Ingall's Creek, Tronson Ridge, Devil's Gulch, Eightmile Lake, and Merritt Lake Trails, all of which extend through roadless areas here in Chelan County. *Continued on page 3.*



American Goshawk
photo by Janet Bauer, Winthrop

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"Enhance, protect, and restore healthy ecosystems and
native biodiversity using science, advocacy, education and on-the-
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The generosity of donors to NCWAS keeps us thriving. We ask for donations once each year and this year's request will be sent to you soon. This is a great time to update your mailing preferences and information. In addition to putting your correct mailing and email address information on the donation form, you can also send us any needed updates by email to membership@ncwaudubon.org. Thank you very much!



Ruby-crowned Kinglet
photo by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

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By including our chapter in your will, trust, retirement plan, or other estate planning documents, you help ensure that conservation, education, and community engagement efforts continue for future generations. We encourage you to discuss your charitable goals with your professional advisors and consider making conservation part of your legacy.

The White-crowned Sparrows are here, which means it must be fall! Every day there are dozens of them feasting on my flowering plants that have gone to seed, fattening up before continuing their southward journey. They also are one of the most abundant species I've been seeing on my morning walks with Gretta, along with Dark-eyed Juncos and Spotted Towhees.

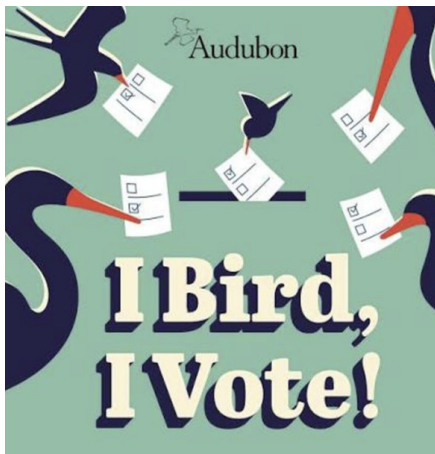
Editor's Notes

Increased bear activity is another sure sign of fall. I haven't seen any bears on my dog walks, but I've seen enough sign (i.e., poo) to know they are around and I would be wise to keep Gretta on a leash and carry bear spray. I recently attended a bear safety training workshop hosted by the Methow Conservancy that was an excellent refresher on what to do, and what not to do, during a bear encounter. The highlight of the workshop for me was a chance to practice deploying an inert can of training bear spray at a life-size photo of a bear mounted on a wheeled cart that was attached to a rope. To semi-replicate an actual encounter, the cart was about 25 feet away and you didn't know when your practice encounter would begin until the person holding the rope shouted "bear!" and started pulling the cart towards you—not quite the real thing but still unnerving enough to be startling! If you would like to learn more about bears and how to coexist with them, I encourage you to take advantage of the numerous resources available on the BearWise® website at <https://bearwise.org>. (BearWise® is managed by a team of bear biologists and communication specialists and is a program of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.) And if you are in the Methow Valley on October 6, you can attend a free event featuring the film *Bears of Durango* to learn more about human-bear conflicts and how to prevent them. (See page 4 for more information.)

On a completely different subject, Merry Roy's review of *The Book of Birds* (see page 7) got me wondering about the differences between American Kestrels and Eurasian Sparrowhawks. Although American Kestrels historically were called "Sparrow Hawks" (and sometimes still are), they are not closely related to Eurasian Sparrowhawks: American Kestrels are in the Falconidae family and primarily eat insects and small mammals, whereas Eurasian Sparrowhawks are in the Accipitridae family, prey almost exclusively on small and medium-sized birds, and are related to our Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. So now I know!



Male and Female American Kestrels
photo by Jennifer Fischer, Winthrop



Sign the Pledge to Vote in 2026

"I Bird, I Vote" is not just a statement of fact—it's a statement of power. Join bird lovers across the United States and pledge to vote in the 2026 elections. In addition to federal races, state and local elections will have an impact on what happens next: on the future of communities, habitats, and the birds we love.

Taking the pledge is a powerful commitment you make along with thousands of others to ensure your voices are represented. Every state has different deadlines and rules for voter registration, so having your personalized voting plan in place is essential.

To take the pledge to say you're in and will vote on or before Election Day on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, visit <https://act.audubon.org/a/ibirdivote>.

Roadless Rule - continued from page 1

Although proponents of rolling back the Roadless Rule have argued that the repeal is necessary to suppress wildfires, the science is clear that more roads in these forests will lead to more fires, not fewer. Research shows that from 1992-2024, wildfires were four times as likely to start in areas with roads than in roadless forest tracts. Another study showed that more than 90 percent of all wildfires nationwide occurred within half a mile of a road. The Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology (FUSEE) sent a letter to Congress earlier this year signed by 120 current and former wildland firefighters that stated that repealing the Roadless Rule would result in more fires and danger for firefighters.

Additionally, the 2001 Roadless Rule permits forest health activities such as prescribed burning and fuel reduction—it only bars new road construction and industrial logging. According to the Forest Service's own research, 34% of all fuel treatment activities between 2001 and 2019 occurred in roadless areas.

For numerous reasons, the Roadless Rule should be retained. Repealing it would be both unwarranted and unwise.

Speaker Series: Jeff Fleischer Northwest Winter Raptor Survey Project

Wednesday, October 14 at 7:00 pm on ZOOM

Email events@ncwaudubon.org to sign up

The Winter Raptor Survey Project is sponsored by the East Cascades Bird Alliance based in Bend, Oregon. The project was originally designed to survey only areas throughout Oregon to determine density and distribution of the various wintering raptor species and monitor changes from year to year. A desire to understand how Oregon birds fit in with the rest of the Pacific Northwest led to a formidable expansion of the project. The Winter Raptor Survey Project is an incredible display of community science in serious action! The first year the project had 79 routes. By the end of this past winter (2025-2026) that number had grown to 654 routes covering over 35,000 miles of transects and surveyed by just over 500 project volunteers throughout all of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington; the northern tier of California and Utah; the western half of Montana; and the southern portions of British Columbia.

This presentation will offer viewers a chance to see how the project was developed and how it has expanded over the years. It is full of wonderful photographs of all 31 species that have been found during more than 25,000 project surveys. Most of the photos were taken by project participants, which makes the project a very personal experience for everyone involved. In addition to the photos, there will be accompanying charts and maps that help display the data collected over the years.



Golden Eagle
photo by Christy Nielsen, Chelan

Other Events and Items of Interest

October 6: Bears of Durango Film

Join the Methow Conservancy, in partnership with the Methow Bear Coalition, for a screening of the film *Bears of Durango*. The film dives headfirst into bear dens, and follows along with biologists studying the relationships between human development and bear behavior. The film is set in the Colorado mountain town of Durango, where prime bear habitat overlaps with expanding human development, and follows a wildlife biologist and her team's research efforts to better understand the drivers behind human-bear conflicts and solutions to proactively prevent them. After the film, there will be a mediated interview with members of the Methow Bear Coalition to learn how similar human-bear coexistence efforts are unfolding in the Methow and what actions we can take as community members to be more bearwise. The event starts at 7:00 am at the Winthrop Barn and is free and open to the public.

October 29: Wenatchee Bird Walk

Join the Wenatchee Public Library and Wenatchee River Institute for a guided bird walk along the Columbia River to look for and learn about local birds. We'll meet at the Walla Walla Point Park playground at 10:00 am and bird until 11:30 am. Binoculars will be available to borrow during the program. Attendees need to bring their own water and sun protection such as hats and sunscreen. Children under age 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Advance registration is strongly recommended. To register please visit the library event page at <https://newlibraries.libcal.com/event/17585316>.

Great Old Broads for Wilderness Forms a New Chapter in North Central Washington

Great Old Broads for Wilderness (<https://www.greatoldbroads.org>) is a women-led national grassroots organization that engages and inspires activism to preserve and protect wilderness and wild lands. Created by older women who love wilderness, "Broads" gives voice to the millions of Americans who want to protect their public lands and wilderness for current and future generations. Broads bring knowledge, leadership, and humor to the wilderness preservation movement. Through the four pillars of advocacy, stewardship, education, and fun, Broads demonstrate our passion for wild places and wildlife across the country. The "Enchanted Broadband" is the new local chapter of Broads just getting started in North Central Washington, spanning from Kittitas to Okanogan counties and all areas in between. The Enchanted Broadband welcomes people of all genders and ages. The chapter's charter members are just beginning to develop local grassroots interests and activities, so this is a great time to join and be part of the formation of this group. Advocacy for improved stewardship of the Enchantments area of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness is the galvanizing issue for this broadband and the source of its name, but the chapter looks forward to expanding its interests and influence across many more aspects of public lands stewardship in North Central Washington. If you're interested in more information or would like to join this grassroots advocacy group dedicated to wilderness and public lands, please send an email for more information to northcentralwaleaders@greatoldbroads.org.

Help Still Wanted for Two Key NCWAS Positions!

Treasurer: NCWAS is seeking a volunteer treasurer to provide financial oversight and board leadership. Existing operational systems are already in place, and support/training will be provided. Duties include maintaining the chapter's chart of accounts and entering transactions in QuickBooks Online, preparing and distributing monthly financial reports for board review, depositing donor checks and sending donor information to the membership lead for entry in Little Green Light, processing expense payments through the bank's bill pay system, and preparing and submitting annual reports to the Secretary of State and the IRS. The treasurer is a member of the NCWAS board, helps prepare the annual budget, and attends monthly board meetings via Zoom (and occasional in-person meetings). Bookkeeping or accounting experience is required. The outgoing treasurer will provide onboarding support. Director and officer insurance coverage is provided. The estimated time commitment is five to eight hours per month. For more information, please contact Art Campbell at rapakivi@methow.com.

Co-Field Trip Lead: NCWAS is also looking for someone to help plan and organize our field trips in Chelan and Douglas counties. Duties include identifying and contacting potential field trip leaders, scheduling and advertising field trips, and reporting field trip activities to the board. For more information, please contact Dj Jones at djtrillium.birder@gmail.com.

Bonaparte Meadows Update

by Mark Johnston, Leavenworth

When the August issue of the Wild Phlox went to print, the fundraising campaign for purchasing the 745-acre Bonaparte Meadows property in Okanogan County was nearing the finish line. Shortly afterward, the full \$1.5 million needed for the purchase (including \$50,000 contributed by NCWAS) was secured!

Bonaparte Meadows is located immediately south of Bonaparte Lake and is mostly surrounded by National Forest and Washington Department of Natural Resources lands. Collectively, Bonaparte Meadows and these public lands harbor a unique mix of habitats that support massive biodiversity in a relatively small space.

The importance of acquiring Bonaparte Meadows cannot be overstated. There are very few sites in our region that host the diversity of birds, mammals, amphibians, and unique plants that occur there. The chance of preserving it is a truly rare opportunity, and we intend to make the most of it.

With purchase of the property now a step closer, planning for its future, including long-term management and habitat restoration/enhancement work, will begin this October. Much more work lies ahead, and NCWAS will remain involved for the duration. We'll provide periodic updates as the process moves forward.

What's That Bird? at Waterville

by Susan Sampson, Wenatchee

The *What's That Bird?* team took its tabletop display to Waterville in September for the Waterville Farm and Craft Market. Exactly 99 visitors visited our pop-up tent to examine our pamphlets, newsletters, and posters of local birds. (The posters are now printed in both English and Spanish.) Also on display were our ever-popular fluffy bird toys that make realistic sounds when squeezed and information about our American Kestrel nest box project. Ken Smith, who fabricates our kestrel nest boxes, guided visitors through the kestrel display.

Our visit had been rescheduled from August when smoke caused cancellation of the event, and although the September date conflicted with the Chelan County Fair, the turn-out was good under the circumstances. Luckily, the monsoon rains did not arrive until we had packed up and gone home.

Our team included Mark Oswood (Fearless Leader), Judy Oswood, "Kestrel Ken" Smith, and Sue Sampson.



Eastern Kingbird Nestlings
photo by Pat Leigh, Mazama

Five Fresh Ideas for Finding Birds This Fall

from “All About Birds” by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Sure, the shiny bells and whistles of the bird world—those bright and cheery warblers—have mostly winged their way south to wintering grounds by now. But it’s still fall, and migration’s not over yet! There are still plenty of birds to see, with new arrivals every day.

Late fall means you have to venture out from those wooded warbler hot spots and into new habitats to find sparrows, waterfowl, and shorebirds. Here are a few places that could be hopping right through Thanksgiving.



White-crowned Sparrow
photo by Janet Bauer,
Winthrop

Weedy Fields for Sparrows

Overgrown pastures, abandoned lots, fields gone fallow—all are havens for the next big wave of migrants to arrive after warblers: sparrows. Looking for sparrows along grassy trails cut in fields can be fun because your birds will flush as you walk and hopefully land on a branch just ahead of you in clear view. Keep an eye out for White-throated Sparrows in the East, Golden-crowned Sparrows in the West, Eastern Towhees in the South, and White-crowned Sparrows and American Tree Sparrows all over.

Mudflats and Marshes for Dabbling Ducks

Late fall is to ducks what September is to warblers—prime migration time. Dabblers are ducks that skim the surface of the water for seeds, aquatic vegetation, and invertebrates, so look for them in shallower waters. This group includes some handsome ducks: the Green-winged Teal with its iridescent green face mask, the Northern Pintail with its elegant tail plume, and the dashing Wood Duck. Females and young of these species tend to migrate earlier and move farther south, while males only move when the cold weather hits.

Bigger Lakes and Reservoirs for Diving Ducks

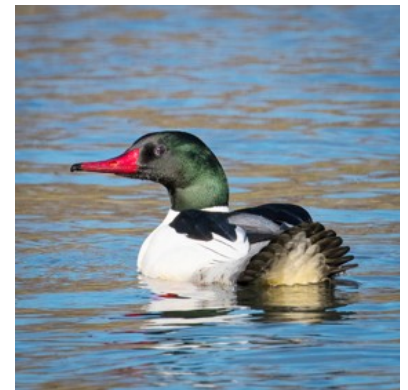
Divers are ducks that plunge underwater and paddle with their large feet to reach mollusks, invertebrates, fish, and submerged aquatic vegetation. Accordingly, diving ducks such as Common Goldeneyes and Common Mergansers favor deeper waters. The gales of November bring a bluebill wind out of the North, as rafts of Lesser and Greater Scaup sweep out of Canada. Hardy divers are pushed south by Old Man Winter; they migrate as their northern waters freeze over.

Coastal Beaches for Shorebirds

The waning days of autumn are too cold for sunbathing or building sandcastles, but if you’re a shorebird it’s the perfect time to snag invertebrates from piles of seaweed washed up on the beach. Large numbers of Sanderlings and Willets settle into their wintering grounds along seacoast beaches in November and early December. Likewise, huge congregations of Dunlins can be found in estuaries and muddy bays. Along the East Coast, it’s the perfect time to add the stout little Purple Sandpiper to your life list, but don’t be fooled—they’re not purple, more gray and white. On the West Coast, look for Black Turnstones and Surfbirds that spend their days foraging on rocky coastlines.

Need Some Help Finding Nearby Hotspots?

eBird contains a Google Maps-like tool for timely birding. Just visit eBird’s Hotspot Explorer, enter your location, and you’ll find a map with pinpoints of hot birding locations. You can narrow the results by date, too, if you like. Click through the pinpoints to see up-to-date lists of what local birders are seeing at these locations right now. For information on how to use the eBird Hotspot Explorer visit <https://support.ebird.org/en/support/home> and click on the “Explore eBirdData” link.



Common Merganser
photo by Janet Bauer, Winthrop

Project FeederWatch Season Starts on November First!

Project FeederWatch turns your love of feeding birds into scientific discoveries. FeederWatch is a November-April survey of birds that visit backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. While most people focus on birds coming to bird feeding stations, you don’t even need a feeder! All you need is an area from which you like to watch birds. Plus, the schedule is completely flexible: you can count every week or once all winter, for as much or as little time as you like.

When you join FeederWatch you will receive tools to help you track and learn about your birds, a year-end summary, digital access to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s *Living Bird* magazine, and an optional double-sided poster of western common feeder birds. To learn more visit <https://feederwatch.org/about/project-overview>.

Book Reviews

***The Book of Birds: A Field Guide to Wonder and Loss.* By Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris (W.W. Norton & Company, 2026), 384 pages.** Reviewed by Merry Roy, Wenatchee.

This is a gorgeous book. Robert Macfarlane, United Kingdom author of landscape, nature, place, people, and language, describes 49 birds with wildly poetic words. These are of course the birds of Britain—like sparrowhawk which sends me to my Sibley app to find how our former “Sparrow Hawk” (now American Kestrel) compares. But the same Merlins and Ospreys span both continents, as well as European Starlings and House Sparrows.

Jackie Morris, British writer and award-winning illustrator, painted each bird described with compelling action and marvelous beauty. She and Macfarlane collaborated earlier on *The Lost Words*, intended to re-wild the language of children, and *The Lost Spells*. Fascinating appendixes illustrate the eggs of each species and include information on egg size, clutch size, incubation periods, wingspans, habitats, and lifespans. Morris makes even appendixes beautiful.

Believe it or not, one of my many favorite descriptions was about European Starlings and their murmurations: “...now it’s a zorbing, shape-shifting, orbing, myth-making form and force; now it’s liquid and colloid and jellyfish-solid; now it’s Rorschach print, chimera, metaphor...” And regarding their feathers: “Those feathers aren’t ‘black’, they’re foil; they’re glittering, iridescent galaxy-maps; they’re disco trousers; they’re sheen of oil. They pop with purple and gleam with green; they’re astroid metals, fallen to earth...” See what I mean?

I could quote on and on but the library just emailed me that *The Book of Birds* is due right now, and the next person in line is waiting. Is it you?

***Feathered Forest: Aloft with Birds in Ancient Trees.* By Marina Richie (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2026), 240 pages.** Review from the September 2026 Birding Community E-Bulletin (<https://www.refugeassociation.org/birding-community-e-bulletin>).

This book by acclaimed nature writer Marina Richie is both a highly personal and equally informative account of her regional activities and studies and those of her scientist colleagues. With an interest in Pacific Northwest old-growth forests since childhood, the author documents her many experiences among the giant trees of Oregon forests and the many events that have influenced her personal life.

Not only does Marina Richie discuss and describe the history of these ancient forests, but she also describes and investigates the many fascinating organisms that inhabit these giant trees. From tiny kinglets and Hermit and Townsend’s Warblers to Varied Thrushes, Steller’s Jays, and Spotted Owls, she lovingly and accurately describes the lives and natural history of some of the many and varied creatures that live in the canopy and deep shade of these giant forest trees.

Her descriptions and accounts of northern flying squirrels and the curious arboreal red tree vole offer the reader unique descriptions of seldom encountered nocturnal mammals, and her description of the remarkable Marbled Murrelet, the alcid that nests in the canopy of old-growth forest trees yet spends most of its life on the open ocean, is singularly amazing.

Richie’s enchanting accounts of the endangered Spotted Owl and the increasing competition from growing populations of Barred Owls provide a remarkable tale of two owl species whose populations are rapidly changing and the challenging efforts to save both species.

In addition to her informative writing style and her personal interest in these age-old forests, *Feathered Forest*, offers descriptions of habitats often not visited by naturalists from other parts of North America, and thus provides a fine sense of what these giant tree forests are really like.

Children’s Books Reviewed by Merry Roy, Wenatchee

***I Am We: How Crows Come Together to Survive.* By Leslie Barnard Booth, illustrated by Alexandra Finkeldey (Chronicle Books, 2025), 44 pages.** Includes an appendix explaining crow intelligence, families, vocalizations, social learning, foraging, roosting, and ability to adjust to urban environments. Recommended reading ages: 5-10 years old.

***Hummingbird’s Big Trip.* Written and illustrated by G. Brian Karas (Random House Studio, 2026), 40 pages.** A simple tale of a young hummingbird worried about its first big trip, working through fear, and overcoming big challenges. Recommended reading ages: 3-7 years old.

***World Without Birds: How to Save Our Planet, One Bird at a Time.* By Nick Lund, illustrated by Asia Orlando (Workman Kids, 2026), 176 pages.** Discusses habitats around the world, how birds are beneficial and what threatens them, and includes positive stories of saving species. Recommended reading ages: 10 years and up.

***Goldfinches.* By Mary Oliver, illustrated by Melissa Sweet (Viking Books for Young Readers, 2026), 40 pages.** Mary Oliver’s poem is gorgeously illustrated, like a nature journal meditation. This is a joyful book for all ages.

October 2026 Wild Phlox

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3rd Wednesday of the Month	Beebe Springs Bird Surveys	Contact Virginia Palumbo vwpalumbo@gmail.com or 509-860-2129
October 3	BirdFest & Bluegrass Festival Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge	www.ridgefieldfriends.org/birdfest-bluegrass
October 6	Bears of Durango Film	See page 4 for more information
October 14	Northwest Winter Raptor Survey Zoom Presentation	See page 4 for more information
October 29	Wenatchee Bird Walk	See page 4 for more information
Nightly through November 15	BirdCast: Washington State Bird Migration Dashboard	https://dashboard.birdcast.info/region/US-WA

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The beautiful photos are even nicer in color.