



KITITTAS AUDUBON SOCIETY

THE HOOTER

March 2006

EDITOR CRICKET WEBB

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- What do you call a minor bird accident?
A feather bender.
- What do you call a formal dance for ducks?
A fowl ball..

Bald Eagle Recovery

In 1963 only 417 nesting pairs existed in the lower 48 states. With the ban of DDT in 1972 and the passage of the Endangered Species Act in 1973 the Eagle began to recover. Now 43 years later there are over 7,000 nesting pairs. February 13 2006, US Fish and Wildlife began the process of removing the Bald Eagle from the Threatened and Endangered Species list. The Bald Eagles status was changed from endangered to threatened in 1995.

The protection for the Bald Eagle will not end very soon. First there is a comment period before this action is final. When the Bald Eagle is removed from the EAS list it will still be protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Both acts protect bald eagles by prohibiting killing, selling or otherwise disturbing the Eagles. The USFWS will work with state wildlife agencies to monitor the status of the species for a minimum of five years, as required by the Endangered Species Act.



Photo by cricket

NEXT MEETING — The Western Pond Turtle Susan Van Leuven

DATE THURSDAY March 16th **TIME** 7:00 PM
PLACE ELLENSBURG HIGH SCHOOL ROOM 131 - North end in the Library Building

The program is about how the western pond turtle came to be so rare in Wash., and what the recovery effort involves. With a focus on what Wash. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife and several cooperators are doing to increase the population(s) to a point where the WPT can be downlisted from endangered to a less precarious standing. Susan's familiarity with the project is mostly with the field effort (not administrative) so I will be talking about the actual hands-on activities. It will be an informal presentation, about 1/2 hr., with a question and answer period to follow. Susan's qualifications are that she has been

working on the pond turtle recovery project since 1998. She has tracked female turtles by radio telemetry, to find their nests, and also tracked juvenile pond turtles for a research project on their habitat preferences. She does turtle surveys in Columbia River Gorge wetlands and evaluate sites for suitability for western pond turtles. She also traps turtles in order to collect survival and growth information. She helps release juvenile western pond turtles at selected sites, to bolster the population at those sites. She has written the annual report on the Columbia Gorge WPT recovery effort each fall since 2002.

KAS Field Trips

March 4th ~ First Saturday BirdWalk at Irene Rinehart River Front Park. 8:00 AM at the bridge parking lot. Dress for the weather, bring field glasses, plan on about 2 hours of walking on uneven ground and finding a number early spring migrants.

March 24th-26th ~ Sand Hill Crane Festival, Othello, WA. (509) 488-2802 ext. 100. Art show, lectures and field trips. Great chance to see lots of birds with good leadership. Call ahead for information.

March 24th-26th ~ Wings Over the Water - Northwest Birding Festival, Blaine, WA. Call ahead for information at (360) 466-4749. See the birds of the

Pacific Flyway heading north.

March 31st - April 1st ~ Olympic Bird Fest, Sequim, Call (360) 681-4076.

April 1st ~ No fooling ~First Saturday BirdWalk at Irene Rinehart River Front Park. 8:00 AM.

April 24th (Mon) - 27th(Thur) ~ Southwest Washington Refuge Tour. Shore, pond, and forest birds! We will tour at least five National Wildlife Refuges in the area. Should be good for migrating birds and local birds setting up nesting territories. Space is limited. Call 933-1558 by April 14th for the itinerary,

COMING IN APRIL!! A BEGINNING BIRD CLASS TAUGHT BY DEBORAH ESSMAN!! FOR THE FIRST THREE WEDNESDAY'S FROM 7:00-9:00 PM WE WILL LEARN ABOUT BIRDS THAT WILL HELP TO IDENTIFY AND ENJOY THEM EVEN MORE. A FIELD TRIP ON SATURDAY, APRIL 29TH, WILL TEST OUR NEWLY-ACQUIRED SKILLS. A FEE OF \$20.00 WILL BE NECESSARY TO COVER THE COSTS OF PRINTING, THE ROOM, AND THE FIELD TRIP. MORE DE-

Field Trip reports

First Saturday Bird Walk

The morning, for me, started with a breath taking sunrise as I drove into Ellensburg for the walk. Something like that just sets the tone for the rest of the day.

We had 11 people on the walk, including a couple of new folks. Getting to know the new folks is one of the best parts of the SMBW. The walk itself started out with a little Sunshine going to mostly cloudy with a breeze, Temp. about 36.

The first bird to greet us was the always bouncy Black-capped Chickadee, followed by a Downy Woodpecker. Walking the road, we heard the unmistakable sound of spring – the male Redwinged Blackbird buzzing from across the golf course. In the process of finding them we found ROBINS – How wonderful to have the sure sign of spring in the midst of a cold and cloudy February day. The best look of the day was a bird we always hope to see but are often disappointed. At the opening to the river, half way back from the ponds, was an American Dipper bobbing on a rock, like it really was not sure it wanted to dive into the river. And it just stayed there bobbing for us all to get a really good look at. There is always one that got missed. Heard, but not seen, was the Kingfisher. The total list of birds we saw were the following:

Black-capped Chickadee, Downy Woodpecker, Redwinged Blackbird, Redtailed Hawk, Song Sparrow, Robins, Kestrel, Starling, Raven, Ring necked Duck, Canada Goose, American Wigeon, Pied-billed Grebe, Common Meganser, Hooded Meganser, Golden Crowned Kinglet, Ruby Crowned Kinglet, Ruby Crowned Kinglet, Magpie, Great Blue Heron, American Dipper and a Stellar Jay. 21 birds total **Cricket Webb with help from Gerry Sorenson.**

Feeder tour Feb 11th

Every other year during the winter months KAS offers a different field trip, the Feeder Tour. We visit members homes/yards to observe how, what, and who they feed. Seventeen members took part this year visiting 5 houses from Ellensburg to Cle Elum. Jeb and Gloria Baldi's house in Ellensburg was first where they use four different types of bird feed, all displayed in sample jars. The four were Woodpecker's Wish, Black Oil Sunflowers, Nyjer Thistle, and Sunflower Hearts. One of the featured feeders here was the nylon thistle sack, available for about

\$5.00 at Old Mill Country Store. Not only can 8-10 Goldfinches and Pine Siskins feed at one time, but the sack is easy to keep clean. (I was also happy to see a Northern Flicker perched in a nearby tree while we were there.)

Hal and Gloria Lindstrom's on the westside of the valley was our next stop. One of the outstanding features at their house was the fruit tree net screen placed in front of their window with rebar at the top and bottom to keep birds from crashing into the window. Upon arrival I heard a Red-winged Blackbird in the distance

(Continued on page 3)

Do thoughts of 'Spring Cleaning' enter your head this time of year? Mine, neither! However, for the birds we must do some cleaning outside to help keep them healthy. Spring and summer can yield some of the most rewarding backyard bird watching during the migration, mating and nesting seasons. Don't stop feeding when the flowers and grass come to life as the weather warms. The springing to life signals 'spring cleaning' around your feeders. Start with a stiff brush to remove accumulated debris from wooden feeders. Scrub the feeders with hot soapy water, but do not add chemicals because wood is porous and can absorb them. Let the feeders dry thoroughly before refilling.

Soak tubular feeders in a mild bleach solution and use a long-handled brush to scrub hard-to-reach areas. You may have to add extra elbow grease to the feeding ports as the bird saliva takes effort to remove. (Some people run their feeders through the dishwasher.)

A handful of uncooked rice is a good cleansing agent for hard-to-reach places in hummingbird feeders. Fill the feeder with a one-part vinegar to four-parts water solution, add the rice and shake vigorously. Don't forget the feeding ports, and always rinse thoroughly.

Hot soapy water applied with a lot of elbow grease is also the best technique for birdbaths. Rinse several times, especially if you use a mild bleach solution to help control algae. Before you put away the bird bath heater for the summer, scrub it with a solution of white vinegar and water to remove mineral deposits.

If birds crash into a particular window, build a net/rebar device (mentioned in the field trip report) to prevent a bird catastrophe. (I have noticed the birds that tend to hit our window are not the yard birds, but migrating birds not familiar with our feeding area.) Also, place feeders apart from each other to give the birds maneuvering room.

With just a bit of cleaning and good dry bird birdfeed, your spring backyard bird watching should be very enjoyable! Gloria Baldi

(Note: Most of this information has been gleaned from the WDFWS and the National Bird-feeding Society.)

WANTED!!! BINOCULARS AND BIRD IDENTIFICATION BOOKS THAT YOU NO LONGER USE. WITH GUIDANCE FROM JIM BRIGGS (KAS SECRETARY) A THIRD GRADE CLASS IN ELLENSBURG IS ESTABLISHING A FEEDING STATION OUTSIDE THEIR ROOM. BOOKS AND BINOCULARS ARE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS PROJECT SUCCESSFUL! ANY YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE WOULD DEFINITELY BE USED!!

(Continued from page 2)

FEEDER TOUR CONTUNUED

that later visited the house, along with the Varied Thrush, American Goldfinches, Spotted Towhee, Black-capped Chickadees, Song Sparrow, House Finches and others!

Our next stop was Marianne and Merle Gordon's at the mouth of the Taneum Canyon. Upon arrival we saw a Bald Eagle soaring along the ridge above. We also watched Red-winged Blackbirds, Steller's Jays, Juncos, Goldfinches, House Finches, Quail, a Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Chickadees. Mountain Chickadees visit this location about once a week. A couple of feeders that sparked some interest were the "No-No" Feeder and Squirrel Resistant Green Absolute II (made by Heritage Farms).

The fourth stop at Karen and Keith Johnson's (Cle Elum) was in the late morning so birds were

pretty quiet except for Rock Pigeons and 'close-up' Mountain Chickadees. The Johnson's have a protected bird feeding area covered and surrounded by chainlink fence to eliminate predators. Their many pine trees bring woodpeckers and nuthatches throughout the year. The final stop at Cricket Webb's (Peoh Point) featured all three types of Chickadees (Black-capped, Mountain, and Chestnut-backed), a Red-breasted Nuthatch, and a Hairy Woodpecker. Cricket reports that she receives quite a bit of wintertime activity because she has the only running water source for the birds in the local area. Cricket also has a few feeders that sparked interest, the squirrel resistant platform feeder (Duncraft 15201) and the Hour-glass No/No feeders. Lunch with hot barley soup and clam chowder, sourdough bread, and dessert was served in the shop around a warm stove, and we finished the day with a short walk to view the snow-covered and sun-bathed Stuart Range. Great ending to a day of birding!!

Chris Caviezel

Recovery continued "Today we celebrate the remarkable recovery of the bald eagle. The return of our national symbol is a victory for wildlife, a victory for conservation, and a victory for the Endangered Species Act. ~ The success of the bald eagle is a success for all Americans. The Endangered Species Act provided the framework for the bald eagle's recovery, but it was the will and actions of individuals that brought this bird back from the brink of extinction. Thanks to the work of landowners, conservationists, business owners, scientists, federal, state and local agencies, and our champions in Congress, bald eagles are once again thriving throughout the nation. The comeback of the bald eagle is testament to what can be achieved through cooperative conservation." *Larry Schweiger President of the National Wildlife Federation*

It is in acknowledgement of the success of the Endangered Species Act that the Bald Eagle was chosen as our bird of the month this month. Those who receive the national magazine know that we are not alone in wishing to celebrate this most glorious of national symbols.

BIRD OF THE MONTH - THE BALD EAGLE



I hope you have all had a pivotal moment when a bird becomes more than just an image. In the mid 80's when the eagle was gaining ground here in Washington, one of the first successful nesting pairs had their nest at the north end of Baker Lake, where we went camping every spring. We were out on the lake in our canoe when we got to watch the nesting pair put on a show of courtship behavior. I don't have the space to tell you all that occurred nor the words to express the range of emotions that experience did, and still does, cause me to feel.



It is not necessary for me to describe the field marks of the mature Bald Eagle. Immature variably patterned with dark brown and white; takes five years to acquire full adult plumage. White not restricted to well defined areas, but appearing scattered throughout body, usually with brown mottling in same area. White in wings primarily in linings and not flight feathers. Bill and cere blackish gray. Eyes dark brown. Feet and lower legs yellow. The first birds are darkest with 3 year birds showing the most white (still mottled all over) but with a dark eye stripe. 4th year is a transitional year to the full adult plumage.

The 4 years that an eagle is maturing they are known to explore. Birds from Florida have been known to wander north to Michigan and California birds have gone as far as Alaska. After their period of exploration they find mates that they return to each year. As with most raptors the female is larger than the male. Although they mate for life, they do find new mates if one mate has died. They spend the winters alone but return to the same area to nest every year. It is not known why but each breeding pair has 2 nests that they alternate between. While the pair only builds a new nest if one of the existing nests is destroyed, they do add layers to it each year. The typical nest is up to 5 feet across and 4 feet high. One of these huge nests, when it finally toppled the tree it was in, weighed over a ton.

Originally it was known as a Fish Hawk. And the long period of immature plumage lead Audubon and most of his peers to believe they were 2 species. Only the adult plumage was called bald.



Getting Ready for Bluebirds

Even though we're still a bit frosty, spring WILL come and the bluebirds will show up looking for suitable real estate to set up housekeeping in anticipation of their courtship and raising families. Last year we saw our first bluebirds on March 10th and 11th when we made an exploratory hike out along the Watt Canyon elk fence to check out the condition of the nestboxes there. One male was already trying to convince a female that he had found the perfect bungalow!

It's not too early to go out and check up on your boxes ~ repair, replace, upgrade, add more boxes, relocate to a better location, clean (see discussion below)? Then you might want to contact Tom Gauron (968-3175) and make a Monday afternoon date to help build some nestboxes.

**Start thinking
about spring
and those
flashes of blue.
Our bluebirds
will be here
soon!**

A few notes on spring cleaning: watch out for enterprising mice and/or chipmunks. They will move into a box and make a nest of finely shredded materials. Use caution; always stand upwind and not in front of the door as you open the box. There is a risk of Hantavirus which is airborne. Some people use dust filter masks and wear gloves as an added precaution; we just try to be very careful about not breathing in the dust and used handiwipes after working at each box. Also, if there is a mouse in the box, they might try to bite or jump out at you!

To clean or not to clean? ~ an on-going debate! Many people who monitor boxes feel strongly that the cleaning is essential for reducing parasites (blowflies that suck blood from the nestlings) and disease. Cornell Labs and other science groups' studies haven't shown that this really helps, in fact, the data shows that there is often a better survival and success rate with birds who use boxes with old nests in them! Surprised? Part of the reason has to do with the Jewel Wasp, a non-stinging parasitic wasp that actually eats the blowfly larvae. When old nests are removed and the boxes cleaned, the Jewel Wasp larvae that hibernate in the old nest material over the winter are destroyed. (We actually didn't see much evidence of a serious blowfly problem in our boxes.) The studies quoted also showed that Eastern Bluebirds overwhelmingly preferred boxes with old nests. So we may try not cleaning out old nests this spring. We'll let you know.

Jan Demorest

(Continued from page 4)

During the spring and winter months the Bald Eagle is a common sight in parts of the Kittitas Valley. Places to find them are:

The Yakima canyon, both above and below Ellensburg, check the big pines for white spots.

All 3 lakes, Keecheluss, Kachess and Cle Elum, attract the Eagles as long as they are free from Ice.

The preferred food is fish but the Bald Eagle is an opportunistic feeder. So in the spring, the best place to see eagles is where ever the cows are calving, the eagles will eat the afterbirth. They do not kill calves or lambs, but will eat any they find dead. One of the many ways we humans kill Eagles is to hit them as they fly from road kill. This is more likely to be trucks on freeways.

The photos at the top of the preceding page and the one on pg1 were both taken within a mile of Brick Mill Rd. and Naneum early in the morning. I did take a photo expedition into the canyon but my subject was drawn out of the tree, who was posing so beautifully, into the sky by 3 other eagles. That was fantastic to watch but not so great to photograph. As proved by the photos at the bottom of the page.

FOUND AFTER THE LAST KAS MEETING: A STRIPED BROWN AND BERRY NECKSCARF. WILL BRING IT TO THE NEXT MEETING UNLESS YOU CALL GLORIA AT 933-1558.

This month I begin a new extended series for the Hooter. We will be looking at the choices in alternate energy. We begin with vehicles, the American obsession with the internal combustion engine is the cause of most pollution and specifically, green house gases. 20% of the worlds wealthiest use 87% of the worlds fuel, much of it in our cars. Don't think that I am not among the guiltiest. I live almost 100 miles from my job and drive either an all wheel drive SUV (a little one but an SUV non the less) or a 1 ton diesel truck. One of my goals in this pursuit of information to write this series of articles is to find a cost effective way to continue my lifestyle with a reduced dependence on Foreign oil and greatly reduced amount of environmental impact.

I am very grateful to Don Wooldridge, for getting the ball rolling. His complete article will be spaced out over the coming months and I hope supplemented by other contributions. If you have more to contribute or differing opinions please send them to me. I will print as many as I can. Cricket Webb

Alternate Energy Topic Paper Don Wooldridge, B.Sc.; M.Sc.

12-06

With soaring gas prices, and with a near-total dependence on imported oil in order for our over-consuming culture to proceed, our government is, belatedly, looking at alternate fuel options. The President's January 31, 2006 State of the Union address, he recognized our need for some level of energy independence. It is important to note, however, that there are no simple answers. Problems range from the technology necessary to manufacture, distribute and, finally, to utilize these unusual fuels in a family of vehicles that largely don't yet exist or are in limited consumer circulation. As an example, the dawn of the hybrid car in widespread use is near but some people are wondering why governments aren't taking more of a lead. And of course, the macro-oil companies do not want to see their highly profitable oil business reduced by a bunch of fiercely independent soy farmers!

Let's review some of the more realistic options (in other words, no nuclear- or water-powered options just yet!)

Cars that recharge as you drive

Hybrid cars are those that use two or more different sources of power such as diesel-electric or gas-electric.

Environmentalists say with gas prices so high and the smog so thick in some areas of the country, the time is now for consumers to consider hybrid cars.

Hybrid cars:

- recharge as you drive, significantly increasing the mileage for your tank of gas.

- have microprocessors which figure out which engine will power the car, depending on speed and load.

- get about 40 miles per gallon of gasoline.

News you can use.

Hybrid vehicles are available now. There is a sizable tax credit available if you purchase a hybrid this year, (amounts up to \$3400.) However the tax code is, as usual, so complex you may need some professional advise before claiming the credit. The IRS will announce later this year how much each hybrid will be eligible for but taxpayers may claim the full amount of the allowable credit only up to the end of the first calendar quarter after the quarter in which the manufacturer records its sale of the 60,000th hybrid. In other words you want to buy early in the year but you may not know how much the credit will be when you buy.

If you wish to understand how hybrid technology works I recommend www.howstuffworks.com. They cover everything from how online dating works to counterfeiting to hybrid cars.

Here are 10 hybrid cars currently on the market and the MPG they get.

Hybrid Model	MPG City/Highway
Chevrolet Silverado Hybrid	18/21
Ford Escape Hybrid	36/31
GMC Sierra Hybrid	18/21
Honda Accord Hybrid	30/37
Honda Civic Hybrid	49/51
Honda Insight	60/66
Lexus RX Hybrid	33/28
Mercury Mariner Hybrid	33/29
Toyota Highlander Hybrid	33/28
Toyota Prius	60/51

Source: FuelEconomy.gov

President - Gloria Baldi	933-1558	Membership - Keith Johnson	674-7552
Vice President - Gloria Lindstrom	925-1807	Newsletter - Cricket Webb	674-4035
Secretary - Jim Briggs	933-2231	Christmas Bird Count - Phil Mattocks	962-2191
Treasurer - Denee Caterson	933-2550	Programs - Hal Lindstrom	925-1807
Conservation - Janet Nelson	656-2256	Publicity - Gerry Sorenson	968-4857
Education - Beth Rogers	674-1855	Social/Greeter - Karen Johnson	674-7552
Field Trip Chairman- Jeb Baldi	933-1558	Webmaster - Craig Johnson	674-1855
Historian - Marianne Gordon	964-2320	Wildlife Habitat - Joe Meuchel	933-3011
Library - Ginger Jensen	925-5816	Bluebird boxes - Tom Gauron	968-3175

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

_____ Kittitas Audubon Membership includes a subscription to the monthly Hooter, and the opportunity to support local activities for \$20.00 per year. .

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Make check payable to Kittitas Audubon Society

Clip coupon and send with your check to:

Kittitas Audubon Membership
 PO Box 1443
 Ellensburg, WA 98826

NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP

_____ National Audubon Membership includes membership in Kittitas Audubon and subscription to both the monthly Hooter and Audubon Magazine (published 6 times a year). Membership is \$20.00 for new members. Renewals are \$35.00 per year.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Make check payable to National Audubon Society

Clip coupon and send with you check to:

National Audubon Society
 Chapter Membership Data Center
 PO Box 51001
 Boulder, CO 80322-1001

Chapter Code Y22
 7XBP

DONATIONS are appreciated and give you the opportunity to further support and fund KAS Chapter activities. If you have a National Audubon membership, donations are especially important since KAS no longer receives a portion of your National Membership dues to defray costs for the Hooter.

_____ \$15.00 American Goldfinch _____ \$100.00 Great Blue Heron

_____ \$50.00 Red-tailed Hawk _____ Other - Donations in any amount are appreciated

Make check payable to Kittitas Audubon Society

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Clip coupon and send with your check to:
 Kittitas Audubon Society
 PO Box 1443
 Ellensburg, WA 98926

KITTITAS COUNTY BUSINESSES SUPPORTING KAS

Old Mill Country Store, Ellensburg, provides a discount on bird seed to KAS members and prints our county bird lists.

Inland Internet, Roslyn, Donates internet service for our Website: <<http://www.kittitasaudubon.org/>>

WISE OWL TRIVIA

1. How will Eagles be protected after they are taken off of the Endangered and Threatened Species list?
2. To encourage the Jewel Wasp what should you not do?
3. How do Bald Eagle help protect new born calves?
4. What are the possible fuels for a Hybrid car??
5. What Hummingbirds do we see in Kittitas County?



Answer to last months Bonus Trivia Question. Downy's have nasal bristles, tail bars, and extent of black on the face and chest. Answer to #5 is in this month bird of the month

The mission of Kittitas Audubon Society is to develop an appreciation of nature through education and conservation, with a focus on birds. The goal for KAS is a vibrant active organization recognized in Kittitas county.

Kittitas Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1443
Ellensburg WA 98926
[Http://www.kittitasaudubon.org](http://www.kittitasaudubon.org)

