



THE HOOTER

EDITOR — CRICKET WEBB

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Who was Steller



STELLER'S SEA EAGLE

My choice for bird of the month is the Steller's Jay. Named for the naturalist Georg Wilhelm Steller, the on-board naturalist for Vitus Bering when he explored Alaska. He was the first European naturalist to describe a number of native species including a black and blue Jay that became known as the Steller Jay.

While shipwrecked on Bering Island he classified a number of the local creatures including the Northern Fur Seal, the Sea Otter, Steller's Sea Lion, Steller's Sea Cow, Steller's Eider and the Spotted Cormorant. The Sea Cow and Cormorant have since been hunted to extinction.

He was also posted on Kamchatka Peninsula where he named Steller's Sea Eagle. His journals made it to St. Petersburg and were later published. The man himself did not survive the trip. Cricket Webb

What I Did On My Summer Vacation

Our chapter does not have programs during the summer. This frees up time to go on vacation. It also frees up a column in the newsletter. I thought it would be fun to fill the space with what our members did with the vacation time. If you had a great, fun or even silly bird experience this summer—let me know so I can write it up for this column. The vacation does not need to be a birding trip, any bird related experience will do. Did your grandchild come visit and help you fill the bird feeders and then try to fly off the roof with a towel for wings? (I tried it—bet you did too) Did you see a special bird on the cruise to Alaska or did you go to your high school reunion and see a cardinal for the first time in 20/30/40 years? You get the idea. I will start us off with my trip to 3 National Parks and 2 National Wildlife Refuges in just over a week.

Glacier National Park was not a complete success, the Going to the Sun road was not open yet & we did not see any of the glaciers. But we camped on the west side of the park along side Lake McDonald. The lake seemed to be dominated by Canada Geese and Common Mergansers. A trip up the river that feeds that lake did get me a quick view of a male Harlequin duck flying at a furious



Female Common Merganser

rate up the falls. It was a brief view but that color pattern can not be mistaken. Seeing glaciers are not such a big deal compared to a life bird like that one.

During the trip around the park we stopped at the Goat Lick Overlook. The Mountain Goats come down to a cliff just across the river to lick the minerals off the rocks. The camping

(Continued on page 3)

KAS Field Trips

June 3, 2006

First Saturday BirdWalk at Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park. 8:00 AM at the bridge parking lot. Bring optics, field guides, and clothes for the season. We will walk for about 2 to 3 hours on uneven ground and should see a good variety of birds at this time of the year.

June 10th 2006

Hummingbird banding at Cricket's house in Cle Elum. This is limited to 10 people. Plan to come

before 7am and stay until the banding is done. You must call me at 674-4035 to secure a spot. See Janet's article elsewhere in the Hooter for a better understanding of what will be happening.

June 15th

Early evening owl prowl. This is limited to 10 people and you must call Jeb at 933-1558 for details.

July 1, 2006

First Saturday BirdWalk at 8:00 AM. (See above)

Field Trip report

On May 6, 2006, was our First Saturday BirdWalk at Irene Rinehart Park. We are so fortunate to have this city park so close to us along the river where there is always something to see. Sometimes this means we must share with others, and this time it was the model hydroplanes on the upper lake. It may

have had an impact on the number of species, but also added to that was all the new leaves, the very high water level because of snow melt, the strong wind, and only six pair of eyes to search. Thus we found only 20 species. Highlights were the Nashville and Yellow-rumped Warblers, three species of Swallows--Tree,

Rough-winged, and Violet-green, and the Spotted Sandpiper. We also saw two species not often seen, the Double-crested Cormorant and a Cooper's Hawk. However, we met new people, saw birds, and had an enjoyable time in the outdoors. Join us any First Saturday. Jeb

HUMMING WITH THE HUMMERS

By Janet Nelson

A last minute invitation to a hummingbird banding at Snoqualmie Pass turned into a delightful event for one relatively new birder, namely me. I had enjoyed watching them at my own feeder for several years but was never sure whether I was seeing females or immature birds along with the males.

I was invited by Chris Caviezel, our Audubon hummingbird person, to the home of Sally and Dave Bankson in Hyak Estates on Saturday, May 20th. Proceedings started at 7 am on a rainy morning. There were lots of hummers flying around. There were two traps set, each contained a hummingbird feeder. When a hummingbird flew in, the traps were closed, trapping the hummer inside. An assistant then put his hand into the trap, very gently closed it over the hummer, and picked it up. It was then possible to put the bird into a cloth bag with a drawstring at the top and cinch it up. The birds seemed relatively calm in the bags. Once out of the bag and wrapped up

most were fairly calm but some of them buzzed their complaint and a few almost flopped off the scale!

Seated at a table near an open window was Dan Harville. This is Dan's avocation; his full time job is as a microbiologist and computer programmer in the Dept of Laboratory Medicine at UW. He was doing the banding and measuring while Sally Bankson recorded the data

Dan weighed the bird, measured the bill and wing cord length, and blew on it with the straw to check the amount of fat (condition). On the males he gave an estimate of the amount of green to rufous color on the back (may possibly be age related) and on the females he counted the throat feathers (also possibly related to the age of the bird) and looked to see if she was carrying an egg. We did see one with an egg, a kind of whitening under the skin on the belly. He put a band on one tiny little leg, put a dab of yellow White Out on the birds head to show he

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT.

Several people have called in the past couple of weeks asking about the Evening Grosbeaks. Jeb and I have also noticed more than the usual number this year feeding 20 to 30 of the gorgeous yellow, black and white species with the pale green 'gross beak' and their dusky females. If you have them you know they devour vast amounts of black sunflower seeds--and they do not do it quietly. Their loud piercing calls sound like an amplified chorus of the common House Sparrows. Evening Grosbeaks do not appear in such large numbers every year. Known as erratic or irregular they follow their food supply, consisting also of insects, buds, saps and seeds from trees and shrubs, in addition to black sunflower seeds. Migrating both north and in elevation, they may travel a different route to their breeding areas on the east side of Washington to the forested ponderosa pine areas at the higher elevations of the Cascades. But as they pass through our area our feeders are a feast they cannot refuse! Enjoy them while they are here for their stay is short! But be prepared, they may show up again in the fall!! Gloria Baldi

(Continued from page 1)

on the other side of the park was not to our liking and the weather looked very threatening so we headed to the nearest dog friendly hotel in Great Falls Montana.

I had hoped to get up really early to be out at the Benton Lake NWR. Exhaustion over took us and it was noon when we arrived. This is the witching hour for birding so I expected to be disappointed.

I could not have been more wrong. There was a Golden Eagle in the tree, a raft of Eared Grebes with a few Horned mixed in, the Eastern Kingbird, Bonaparte's & Franklin Gulls, a White Faced Ibis, Avocets, a Blue Wing Teal and a whole flock of Ruddy Ducks, just to name a few. Wow--wonder what the place would be like early morning.

By the time we got to Yellowstone, the weather was looking very nice. So we shared a campsite with a Ruby Crowned Kinglet. In spite of the Mountain Bluebirds being as common as fleas and the regular sightings of both the Lesser and the Greater Sandhill Cranes, birds were not the wildlife bonanza in this park--the wolves were. In addition to seeing 2 of them we woke in the middle of the night to their howls. The next day the Bison wandered through the camp. No damage done but man are they huge! The weather turned on us again the day we were due to check into the Yellowstone Lake Hotel. Sitting in the classic elegance of the sun room lobby watching the swallows swarming over the lake is grand way to end a day.

We got to the Grand Teton's before it started to snow. Yeah--snow! This is my summer vacation, where's the pool? I would love to say that after a frozen night in an antique cabin that the weather improved and the view of the Grand Teton's was overwhelming but in truth it was miserable. The



bottom 500 feet look nice but--Oh well we will have to go back. Nothing was out--not even the moose.

One unexpected stop at a fishing access at the after bay for Palisades Reservoir in Idaho was astounding for the number of Chipping Sparrow., American White Pelicans and Osprey. I can't guess the number of the Sparrows but my count on the Osprey is 5 in the Sky circling one small area.

We shifted into go home mode (mood) but on the ways we stopped at Camas NWR. I had hoped for either moose or Trumpeter Swans but did not feel too bad about having to settle for Northern Harriers, Western Tanagers and Western Kingbirds. The best sight was the interplay between my dog in the back seat and the coyote a hundred feet distant. They were both clearly aware of each other and after a canine version of a staring contest--agreed to leave each other the territory they came with.

I saw more than I can remember but there is a lot left to see. Looking forward to another trip back there. Cricket Webb

BIRD OF THE MONTH—Steller Jay

Stellar's Jay, a member of the Corvid family which means they are smart. A trait that does not always endear them to everyone. I stopped being angry about how they figure out how to get to all the suet cakes—no matter what I do. Instead, I have learned to enjoy the contest and applaud their success. One of the better antics is the Jay that has learned to fly up and grab the suet basket and hang upside down. The one in the picture to the right has learned to grab the Shepard hook at the bottom of the "v" and flapping furiously grab the suet basket chain. After that it is simply a matter of bending over to peck away.

Stellar's Jays are the most common Jay in the west and occur from Alaska to Mexico. Color variation is generally darker north and west with interior birds having some white streaks on the forehead. I did notice the Yellowstone variety were a paler blue and the black cape did not seem to come

down as far.

The voice of the Stellar's Jay is another reason they not always welcome. They are usually loud and not always pretty sound. But in addition to the shook shook shook and shaaaar they do a fair mimic of a hawk that clears my feeders faster than the real thing. They nest in trees, usually conifers, between 15—25 feet up. The nest are cup shaped, made of twigs moss, grasses and mud but often contain paper. They tend to be quiet around the nest but very vocal if the nest is discovered.

If you hear a repeated scolding from a Jay, it pays to check it out. Last year on a field trip, Gloria Baldi had the good sense to pay attention and we got to see a Stellar's Jay chase a Great Horned Owl clear across a grove of trees and out to the lone tree in the middle of a sage brush field. We should have gone back to see what the Jay was chasing the owl away from. Could have



been food but it also could have been the nest. Stellar's Jays can be seen all over the valley but most often in the conifer, mixed forest and forest edges. I have been told that if you have Magpies, you will not have Jays. While the 2 do prefer different habitat, I don't completely believe that never seen in the same place.

Cricket Webb.

EDITORS NOTES

First let me thank Gloria for the very nice thank you on the opposite page. I love doing what I do for KAS, especially this part. I have the forum for the things I feel are important, a great excuse to go out photographing birds and the chance to share my passion for the beautiful and sometimes silly creatures, but always enjoyable our organization was founded to preserve. If you really want to enrich your live, find something to completely throw your life into.

So often the presidents message says exactly what I have been thinking about. On my home from my vacation, I was wondering how the birds I feed had faired under the care of the neighbor. I only had a couple dozen pairs of Grosbeaks when I left. If the hoard that had come here the last couple of years descended, the 50 lbs of Sunflower seeds I had left him would not be enough. When I got home, the same 2 dozen pair were still here. So I am having a different experience than Jeb and Gloria. I have about a quarter of the goofy, raucous friends I have entertained (or been entertained by) than in past years. My budget is pleased to share the joy. I do have 2 pair of Black Headed Grosbeaks this year, twice as many as last year.

There are 2 very interesting news stories about birds in the media this week. One sad and the other kind of gross but wonderful too.

The sad one is that a breeding pair of eagles, apparently got their talons locked and fell into the Sound just off Magnolia. One drowned but the other was rescued by neighbors. For the complete story go to <http://www.zwire.com/site/news.asp?brd=855> Go to the Magnolia News and scroll down. Next week you might have to search for "Eagle" in the archives. If that does not work or if you are not online, call me and I will send you a copy. The other story is the California Condors that are feeding on a dead grey whale in Big Sur. This is historically part of their normal diet. In fact, in 1805, a Condor was "collected" by Lewis and Clark expedition feeding on a dead whale at the mouth of the Columbia. If you are interested in seeing pictures of this they are available. <http://www.informationforeveryone.com/whale/>

Hint, not for the squeamish!

Cricket Webb

(Continued from page 2)

had banded it and then let it go out the window. He called out the statistics, hurrying along, as he did not want to hold them very long. He said they get stressed out if held too long. He said they get stressed out if held too long. One of them was closing its eyes, a sign of stress. He said he sometimes feeds them nectar to help de-stress them during the examination. He kept going along at about 2 minutes a piece for this procedure.

He was able to hold conversations, and taught a number of people, including me, about what he was doing as he went along. Dan works on hummingbird projects for the master bander in Victoria in conjunction with researchers at the University of Arizona and some independent researchers. Their primary project is a long term project to study migration patterns and population decline in Rufous Hummers. In the process of doing all this banding there are several other questions that the data can help answer such as what their feeding patterns are (feeders vs flowers), what their movements are during and after breeding and how the immature birds disperse from the nesting site. They also are applying this to Anna's hummingbirds and hope to find out what happens to the east side Anna's in the winter. On the west side they stay all year but those from the east side disappear in the winter. (Anna's have been seen at the Pass and in Cle Elum).

THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!

Kittitas Audubon owes an extra big 'thank you' to Cricket Webb, our newsletter editor. Not only does Cricket devote a large time period each month to constructing the Hooter, but she has just arranged for the donation of a laptop computer so KAS will have its own equipment for programs. Some of you may have noticed that, whether our monthly speakers brought their own equipment or if KAS borrowed equipment, at times we kept our fingers crossed that all pieces would be compatible and our program could 'go off without a hitch'. Thus Cricket went to work exploring the possibility of a donation of our initial piece--and was successful! Again, thank you Cricket! We are now searching for a power point projector.

(P.S. Cricket also helps lead our First Saturday BirdWalk when we need her.) Gloria Baldi

Tid bits picked up from Dan:

Hummers weigh 2-4 grams.

The female has a longer beak than the male.

The female has a clump of feathers at the neck which appear to be black dots or a bar from the side but are iridescent red when viewed from straight on! They have an all green back. Males start out with a green back but it turns rufous as they mature.

Hummers use their tongue somewhat like a straw to lap up and extract the moisture from the nectar.

They have been known to nest 3-30 feet off the ground.

The female lays 1-2 eggs and does not lay them until they are both formed and have their shell on.

The female feeds primarily on insects after the babies hatch so that she has high protein food for the babies to grow on.

Stress is normal for these and other birds, they live with the threat of attack etc. and recover from stress fast. They are adapted to it!

Hummers are very tough little birds despite their tiny size.

Please welcome the following new members.

Kris Hall and John Anderson from Cle Elum

Bill Lorenz, Nancy J Salye, Margery Skeen & Rose Harrig from Ellensburg.



Blue Wing Teal from Benton Lake NWR

Untested alternate fuels are a ways off from practical use

Arnold Schwartzneger's "Hydrogen Highway" is far far away from fruition, due to the lack of fully developed and costly fuel cell engines, maintenance requirements and safety concerns ("Daily Record headline: "Entire small mid-Washington Town of Ellensburg Disappears in Fuel Truck Mishap on I-90!"). Right now all manufacturers are actively investigating the useable options.

Liquified Natural Gas, or Compressed NG (LNG and CNG) have both been tried in Canada. The storage problems required oversized special high pressure tanks in the trunk, to the degree that cargo storage was really limited! Additionally, power was way down, especially at higher altitudes in the mountains, and the tanks often froze up in cooler temperatures.

Finally, I can tell you, truthfully, that the Big 5 in the automotive world have not yet developed the oft-mentioned mythical engine that gets over 200 mpg, and runs on water or 2 oz of pure "unobtainium extract"! While a few farmers claim to have been paid off with multi-millions by the auto or oil companies in order to "kill:" their 150 mpg engines that run on hog squeezings, it's hard to imagine the chemistry that would allow such vast efficiency! Sorry!

Don Wooldridge

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The Hydrogen economy is referring primarily to fuel cells as the energy conversion device, with hydrogen as the fuel. A fuel cell is similar to a battery in that it produces electricity to be used to power electric motors. Unlike a motor/generator set, the fuel cell has no moving parts, and combines streams of oxygen and hydrogen fuel to produce water vapor and electricity with a relatively high efficiency.

Though the thermal efficiency of a fuel cell and electric motor (40%) can easily double that of a gasoline engine (20%), the problems involved in producing and distributing the hydrogen fuel are significant. For example, it is estimated that to deliver the amount of energy in one tanker truck of gasoline would require 17 to 20 tanker loads of compressed hydrogen. Even the most optimistic numbers for hydrogen show an energy balance of about 0.60, meaning that you must use 100,000 BTU of process energy to produce 60,000 BTU of gaseous hydrogen fuel, which mostly eliminates the benefit from the fuel cell efficiency.

It seems more likely that the hydrogen economy will be based on methanol or ethanol fuels, which can be reformed into hydrogen within a fuel cell system. There is much research into fuel cells at present, and there are a number of technologies that hold promise, not only for transportation uses but also for home uses.

As an example, a stationary fuel cell system approximately the size of a refrigerator could generate 5 kw of electricity and enough waste heat to replace a furnace and water heater. When the heat demand is in excess of the electrical demand, extra electricity could be generated and fed back into the power lines, spinning the meter backwards and reducing the need for more generating capacity and transmission lines within the utility grid. IdaTech in Bend, OR produces a fuel cell system like this capable of running on natural gas, methanol, ethanol, or biodiesel.

**Roger Beardsley**



|                                   |          |                                     |          |
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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

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Webmaster – Mark Whitesell                      Email [markwhitesell@hotmail.com](mailto:markwhitesell@hotmail.com)

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## 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/>>

Why did the duck go ring-ring?  
What did the little bird say to the big bird?  
What do you call a formal dance for ducks?  
What kind of ducks rob banks?  
Why was the duck unhappy?  
Why did the pigeon need to get out?  
Which bird does construction work?  
Which birds work underground?  
What kind of doctor treats a duck?  
What kind of weather excites a pet duck?  
What holiday is strictly observed by all birds?

He got a phone bill.  
Peck on someone your own size.  
A fowl ball.  
Safe quackers.  
His bill was in the mail.  
He was cooped up at home all week.  
The crane!  
Myna birds.  
A quack doctor!  
Fowl weather, of course!  
Feather's Day!

**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**  
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**[Http://www.kittitasaudubon.org](http://www.kittitasaudubon.org)**

