



KITITTAS AUDUBON SOCIETY

January 2007

# THE HOOTER

EDITOR — CRICKET WEBB

KASHooter@kittitasaudubon.org

## TEST PROVES BIRDS SMARTER THAN BIRDERS

### **FIRST CLE ELUM CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

On December 14th occurred the first Cle Elum CBC, and in case you do not remember, this was the day it snowed--and snowed--and snowed. During the eight hours Jeb, Scott Downes and I were counting and traveling, it snowed eight inches of heavy wet snow. Distance viewing was definitely out for the day!!

The event was organized by Michael Hobbs, a westsider, who with several people did an exploratory run last year. We met at the Sunset Cafe, where most had breakfast, to receive assignments. This year approximately twenty people participated, with eight of us from KAS (Cricket Webb, Keith Johnson, Beth Rogers, Craig Johnson, Jo Ellen Richards with a Forest Service co-worker, Jeb and myself.) Scott Downes (former CWU grad student) came from Yakima, with the balance of bird-counters from the westside.

With the predicted snow all drivers had 4-wheel drive--and it was a good thing, because it was required often in turn-arounds as the snow deepened. Our group of three had the Teanaway area, usually an area of many birds because to the habitat. However, the birds were definitely smarter than we were for they were tucked away someplace out of the weather. Few were heard, much less seen. (I thought of Beth and Craig doing their snowshoe route becoming dripping wet trying to count birds who were quietly hiding.) However, our car did tally 31 species of the 66 total for day--a fair number of species, but low numbers of birds.

Jeb and I did not stay for dinner as the snow caused I-90 to be closed and Hwy 10 was a sheet of ice. It took us two full hours to get from Cle Elum home to Ellensburg with ice and traffic. What an experience the day was! Would we do it again? Most likely.

*Gloria Baldi*

### **ELLENSBURG CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DELAYED**

After the snow on Dec 14 and more snow, wind and power outages on the 15th the decision was made to delay the Ellensburg Christmas Bird Count until December 30th. There will be a report of the results of that count in next month's Hooter.

*Cricket Webb*

## NEXT MEETING

### *PHOTO SAFARI TO BOTSWANA*

<b>DATE</b>	THURSDAY JANUARY 16TH	<b>TIME</b>	7:00 PM
<b>PLACE</b>	ELLENSBURG HIGH SCHOOL ROOM - 232		

Felicity Taylor-Foenix, a local nature-loving adventurer, will give a PowerPoint slide presentation of her photo safari to Botswana, Africa in August/September 2006. Nearly three weeks of camping in the Central Kalahari Game Refuge and the Okavango Delta in Moremi Park

lent itself well to adding 85 birds to her LifeList, lots of photos and interesting items--feathers, porcupine quills, carvings, crafts, etc. All Audubon meetings and field trips are open to the public, so feel free to come and meet us with us. Stay after the meeting for juice, treats and conversation.

## KAS Field Trips

**January to May 2007** ~ ~ for your new calendars

**January 6th:** First Saturday BirdWalk ~ 8:00 AM Irene Rinehart River Front Park. Meet at the bridge parking lot. Wear clothes/shoes for the weather & bring binoculars. Walk an hour or two on uneven ground (snow ?)--a walking stick may be a help.

**January 20th:** (Saturday) Bio-Diesel production. This is our opportunity to find out all about this new fuel, as it is being produced right here in Ellensburg. Phil Mattocks and Steve Verhey are the owners and will be our guides to this inside trip, giving you all you wanted to know about this alternative fuel. Please join us at 10:00 AM at Central Washington Bio-Diesel. Limited to 15 people. Please call 933-1558 for directions and sign up.

\*\*\*More details on the following field trips will be given closer to the date.

**February 3rd:** First Saturday BirdWalk ~ 8:00 AM Irene Rinehart Park

**February 10th:** Saturday ~ Fairview, Vantage Hwy, Columbia River - Raptors & Water Fowl

**March 3rd:** First Saturday BirdWalk ~ 8:00 AM Irene Rinehart Park

**March 24th:** Saturday ~ Confluence River Park near Wenatchee- Cricket Webb

**April 7th:** First Saturday BirdWalk ~ 8:00 AM Irene Rinehart Park

**April 28th:** Saturday. Crab Creek & Columbia National Wildlife Refuge ~ Marianne Gordon

## DEAD BIRD???

Just a reminder for anyone who finds a dead bird. If it passes the 'smell test', retrieve it in a plastic bag as you would pet droppings, i.e., with your hand in a plastic bag to be placed in a second plastic bag. Label it with the date, location, your name, and how you think it may have died. Place it in the freezer until you can bring it to a chapter meeting, or call 933-1558 and I will pick it up. KAS gives specimens to CWU for avian data and their museum collection. After data has been collected, the bird will be stuffed (preserved as 'study skin') to be included in the archives for educational use. KAS has been fortunate to use some of these specimens when giving bird presentations to groups--and pictures are good, but specimens are **outstanding!** Jeb and Gloria Baldi

## FIELD TRIP REPORT

### **First Saturday BirdWalk 12-2-06.**

The temperature hovered around 10 degrees with clear skies and about 7 inches of snow on the ground. Who would go looking for birds on such a day?? Fifteen hardy souls arrived eager to see what we could find at our unique city park. A long look was not presented most of the time as the birds were quickly moving about, but we did find 22 species. The lower lake had no open water so no waterfowl there, but on the upper lake there was a nice pond of water with Canadian Geese and five duck species. The scope gave us good looks without causing them to flush as they relaxed pruning and feeding. Three Brown Creepers and several views of Winter Wrens were great sightings. These were life birds to two observers to add to their list. However, the 'big event' was the hoar frost in the low sun light that provided a crystal light show seldom seen unless one ventures out on cold winter morning after a fog. It was beautiful!

Over the years as we have done the BirdWalks we have found each month to be a new adventure with good friends. We hope you will join us on January 6th. Jeb Baldi



A wisp of a thought this holiday season.

A quote from **Rachel Carson**: *There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of birds. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature-the assurance that the dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter.*

With the snow, ice, and cold temperatures seemingly beginning earlier this year, the assurance that spring will come is indeed a healing warm thought. In regards to the birds, I always look forward to the spring migration in our riparian area, but am reminded that this cold weather has brought more birds of varied species within five feet of viewing outside our windows than at any other time of year. Real joy! Besides the numerous regulars of House Finches, Goldfinches, Dark-eyed Juncos, Black-capped Chickadees, and California Quail, we are daily watching Downy Woodpeckers, Spotted Towhees, a Song Sparrow, a Cooper's Hawk, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Flickers, and rare spottings of a Fox Sparrow, a Chestnut-backed Chickadee, a Northern Shrike, and a Brown Creeper. So maybe this very cold weather should not hurry away too quickly. Jeb and I will just sip our cup of coffee in our warm abode and watch through the windows.

**Very best wishes in the New Year** and good birdwatching to each of you, whether it be out in the field or at your feeders through the window. Gloria Baldi

#### FRAZIL ICE

If you found yourself along the Yakima River during the week of cold weather we recently experienced, you probably noticed one of the fascinating phenomena of the physics of winter. Standing on the bank you saw a shelf of ice with tendrils extending into the river from the bank. You also saw clumps of ice that look like slush floating in the current. If you watched for a while, you saw the floating ice crystals join the ice at the edge of the river or stick to rocks in the current.

This is called frazil ice and is the result of supercooling of the river water. This happens when sub-freezing air cools the surface of the water to slightly below the freezing temperature, but because the water is in motion, ice cannot form in the normal manner. As the supercooling continues, eventually the temperature of the water gets cold enough that ice crystals become suspended in the water. These begin to clump together and float to the surface.

It is these clumps that are of interest to the observer. They can aggregate into fairly large ice floes and eventually they reach the slack water near shore or become stuck behind an obstruction. Sometimes the ice can reach across a river, causing a blockage on the surface. Water continues to flow under the bridge but the frazil ice is so sticky that new crystals adhere to the underside of the ice bridge. This can result in an incredible thickness of ice.

This happens annually along the Hudson River in upstate New York and often the ice can become several feet thick. When the spring thaw occurs and the river rises, the ice buckles and is pushed up along the shore. Chunks of ice can pile up along the riverbank and may even be pushed over the road along the river. In fact, one section is called the Ice Meadows of the Hudson. This happens so regularly that the ice scours the riverbank much like a glacier. Consequently an ecosystem of specialized plants has developed that is adapted to the scouring condition. Frazil ice can occur anywhere the air temperature is cold enough. In 1956 an ice jam caused by frazil ice blocked shipping in the Mississippi River.



It will be interesting to see how much ice builds up on the Yakima if we get any more cold weather. If the cold spell lasts we may see some spectacular formations. The best time to see frazil ice is in the morning when the cold temperatures of the night have really supercooled the river but it can continue all day if the temperature stays below freezing.

*Jim Briggs*

Frazil Ice Crystal fully grown into dendritic shape with original sphere of nucleation still visible at center

## BIRD OF THE MONTH—The Brown Creeper



*"The brown creeper, as he hitches along the bole of a tree, looks like a fragment of detached bark that is defying the law of gravitation by moving upward over the trunk, and as he flies off to another tree he resembles a little dry leaf blown about by the wind."* [Tyler 1948](#)

One of North America's most inconspicuous songbirds, the Brown Creeper is the only treecreeper in North America. Its camouflage and high-pitched vocalizations make it difficult to spot, yet it is widespread in coniferous and mixed, coniferous & deciduous, forests from Alaska and Canada south

into Central America. In its endless pursuit of bark-dwelling invertebrates, it begins at the base of a tree trunk, climbs upward, sometimes spiraling around the trunk until it nears the top, then flies to the base of a nearby tree to begin the process again. This creeper uses its slender, down turn bill to glean invertebrates—mainly insects & spiders—from cracks in the bark.

It was not until 1879 that naturalists discovered its unique habit of building its hammock-like nest behind a loosened flap of bark on a dead or dying tree.

Although the Brown Creeper is found in a variety

of forest habitats, it favors closed-canopy forests with plenty of large dead or dying trees for nesting and large live trees for foraging. It is most abundant in mature and old-growth forests in summer but uses a wider variety of wooded habitats (deciduous forests, suburbs, parks, and orchards) in winter. This creeper is often considered a year-round resident throughout its breeding range, but northern and high-altitude populations migrate. It is territorial during the breeding season, but in winter, often joins mixed-species foraging flocks and roosts communally with other Brown Creepers.

Populations of this species have declined in northwestern Douglas fir forest owing to loss of mature and old-growth trees. Current data indicates the species is stable in most areas in North America. This assessment is based on the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) and should be viewed with caution. There are low numbers of individuals counted on routes and count method is based on roadside surveys. It is highly likely that creeper numbers have continued to decline in the West because of timber-harvesting practices. Degradation of habitat via the harvesting of large, live trees, salvage-logging practices that remove dead or dying trees, and the increasing fragmentation of forests are the greatest known threats to current populations. Partners in Flight groups are concerned about Brown Creepers in Washington, among others, because of the negative effects of logging and forest fragmentation and the association of this species with large trees and a rare community type.

*Excerpt from North American Birds Online*

### COLLECTIVE TERMS FOR BIRDS

**gulls** A colony of gulls

**gulls** A screech of gulls

**hawks** A cast of hawks

**hawks** A kettle of hawks

**herons** A siege of herons

**hummingbirds** A charm of hummingbirds

**jays** A band of jays

**jays** A party of jays

**jays** A scold of jays

**lapwings** A deceit of lapwings

**lapwings** A desert of lapwings

**larks** An exaltation of larks

**magpies** A tiding(s) of magpies

*I can't choose which one I like best, a charm of Hummingbirds or a scold of Jays*

# DISCOVERY TRAIL UPDATE.

Due to the numerous inputs that there are major blowdowns across the trail, I thought Saturday November 4th would be a good day to clear blowdowns off the Discovery Trail. Leroy Kalmbach offered his assistance to me, which I was very grateful to have, as I didn't know for sure what was in store or the amount of blowdowns.

We left our house at 10 AM and with chainsaw in my backpack and Leroy carrying the axe and shovel, we were on the trail at 10:40. First stop was at the kiosk to check for trail brochures, none available. Next stop was at sign post 1 to check on the prototype permanent sign that KAS placed this summer. It was still in place and doing well in the recent snow cover.

We came across our first blowdowns between sign post 1 & 2, a major one with 4 large trees. Cut them out and decided to continue on the trail to see if there were more blowdowns, sure enough there were several more with a monster old growth near the view point at sign post 8. This one was bigger than my chainsaw bar so had to cut from both sides. Once around the point the rest of the trail was clear. Did find one over the trail on the cutoff back to the parking lot.

We were back at the parking lot at 1:30. Reported our efforts and the lack of brochures to Tim Foss at the forest service. He thanked us and insured me that they are in the process of printing new brochures and will supply them at the kiosk. Hopefully there wont be more blowdowns during the winter season and if anyone does find more please let Kittitas Audubon know so they can be removed.

Keith Johnson

## The Magic of Water

Have you ever noticed that when food sources become more scarce, perhaps as a result of inclement weather, that your bird feeders become more popular with the birds? As birders we tend to focus on feeding the birds. Sometimes there is one aspect of attracting birds that sometimes gets over looked, especially in winter. Like Humans, all wild life, including our feathered friends, the wild birds, need water in order to survive.

During the winter water becomes scarce, primarily because the usual water sources have two factors not working in the birds favor. Either their usual water source is frozen, and/or excessive amounts of snow can cover the water. The bird then spends enormous amounts of energy searching for water – energy that could be better spent trying to survive the winter cold.

Adding a heated bird bath to your wildlife sanctuary is something that will be very much appreciated by your feathered friends and you will be providing the greatest resource that birds need in order to survive.

Should you get a bird bath heater or a heated bird bath? What's the difference? A bird bath heater is usually an additional piece of equipment that is placed in your already existing bird bath. It certainly can do the job. Recently I purchased a heated bird bath which I have combined with a water wiggler and have found it to be very good. The first night it was placed outside the temperature dropped to Eight degrees and the water was not even close to freezing. The second day my bird bath was out a Red Breasted Sap Sucker was seen at my feeder and has been there ever since the last few days (as I write this).

When using a heated bird bath, make sure that your power source is safe. You'll want to make sure that the outlet you are using is a GFCI outlet. If you are unsure you may wish to hire an electrician to check it out or install a GFCI outlet.

During the Summer, simply unplug the heated bird bath. However, I suggest using a Water Wiggler, all year round. Not only does the water wiggler help prevent the water from freezing, it keeps the water constantly moving which not only keeps the water cleaner, it also helps to attract the attention of the birds,

Bird Bath heaters can be found at a wild bird store and/or local hardware or large discount stores as well as on the internet.

**Chris Caviezel**

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*Ed. Note: The following promotes Chris's Web site. The board is considering how to handle advertisement. While we do not wish to become a commercial enterprise, we also realize that there is value in informing our members about bird related items. If you have an opinion on the use of promotional articles or advertisement please contact me at [kashooter@kittitasaudubon.org](mailto:kashooter@kittitasaudubon.org) or call me (509) 674-4035. The board meetings are open to the general membership so you are also welcome to come to next board meeting. We meet the first Thursday of every month in the science building at Central University. Call any of the board members for directions (the room changes all the time)*

Heated bird baths are more commonly found on line. My favorite bird baths and bird-bath accessories are found at [www.hummingbirdsonly.com/bird-baths](http://www.hummingbirdsonly.com/bird-baths). The heated bird bath I recommend is the 14" Heated Bird Bath, by Allied Precision. This one can be placed on your deck railing and or placed on the included pole. Additionally the Water Wiggler, by Allied Precision can also be found on this page.

## **Which form of Electrical Generation should be studied next? What are the choices? This is the subject of this month's article.**

.Consumers expect electricity to be available whenever they plug in an appliance, turn a switch, or open a refrigerator. Satisfying these instantaneous demands requires an uninterrupted flow of electricity. In order to meet this requirement, utilities and nonutility electricity power producers operate several types of electric generating units, powered by a wide range of fuel sources. These include fossil fuels (coal, natural gas, and petroleum), uranium, and renewable fuels (water, geothermal, wind, and other renewable energy sources).

Steam-electric generating units burn fossil fuels, such as coal, natural gas, and petroleum. The steam turns a turbine that produces electricity through an electrical generator. Natural gas and petroleum are also burned in gas turbine generators where the hot gases produced from combustion are used to turn the turbine, which, in turn, spins the generator to produce electricity. Additionally, petroleum is burned in generating units with internal-combustion engines. The combustion occurs inside cylinders of the engine, which is connected to the shaft of the generator. The mechanical energy provided from the engine drives the generator to produce energy. In 2003, approximately 40 quadrillion Btu (quads) of energy were used to generate electricity. Roughly one-third of this was converted into the 13 quads of electricity that reached end-users (3,675 billion kilowatt-hours). The other two-thirds wound up mostly as waste heat and dissipated into the environment.

*Coal was the fuel used to generate the largest share (50.8 percent) of electricity in 2003 1,974 billion kilowatt-hours(kWh). This is over one and a half times the annual electricity consumption of all U.S. households (1,273 billion kWh). Natural gas was used to generate 650 billion kWh (16.7 percent), and petroleum accounted for 119 billion kWh (3.1 percent).*

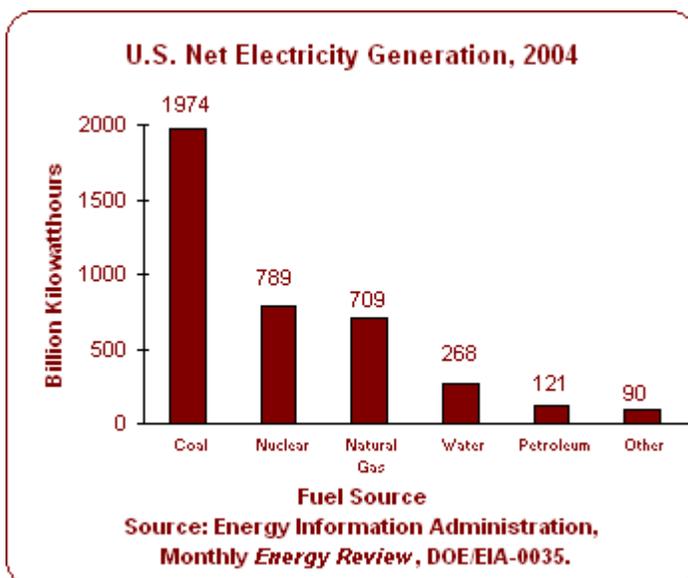
In nuclear-powered generating units, the boiler is replaced by a reactor in which the fission of uranium is used to make steam to drive the turbine. Nuclear generating units accounted for the second largest share (20 percent) of electricity generation in the United States in 2003, 764 billion kWh.

Hydroelectric power units use flowing water to spin a turbine connected to a generator. In a falling water system, water is accumulated in reservoirs created by dams, then released through conduits to apply pressure against the turbine blades to drive the generator. In a run-of-the-river system, the force of the river current applies the pressure to the turbine blades to produce electricity. In 2003, hydroelectric generation had the fourth largest share (7 percent) of electricity production at 276 billion kWh.

Nonwater renewable sources of electricity generation presently contribute only small amounts (about 2 percent) to total power production. These sources include geothermal, refuse, waste heat, waste steam, solar, wind, and wood. Electricity generation from these sources in 2003 totaled 87 billion kWh. Total electric power industry generation in 2003 was 3,883 billion kWh, slightly more than the 2002 total of 3,858 billion kWh. Of this total, utilities net generation for 2003 was 2,462 billion kWh, and net generation by independent power producers was 1,259 billion kWh.

*Excerpt from Energy Information Administration, the Official Energy Statistics from the U. S. Government.*

[www.eia.doe.gov/](http://www.eia.doe.gov/)



**HOOTER**

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Make check payable to Kittitas Audubon Society

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**NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP**

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

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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 cost 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 \_\_\_\_\_ Clip coupon and send with your check to:

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Membership forms are also available on our Web site [Kittitasaudubon.org](http://Kittitasaudubon.org).  
 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/>>

### **LATE BREAKING NEWS -**

#### **Ancient ice shelf breaks free from Canadian Arctic**

The Ayles Ice Shelf, roughly 41 square miles in area, was one of six major ice shelves remaining in Canada's Arctic. The collapse was so powerful that it was picked up on seismographs 150 miles away. This massive event actually happened 6 months ago but no one was there to witness it. Scientists spotted the new ice island in satellite images.

Warwick Vincent of Laval University, who studies Arctic conditions, traveled to the newly formed ice island and could not believe what he saw.

"This is a dramatic and disturbing event. It shows that we are losing remarkable features of the Canadian North that have been in place for many thousands of years. We are crossing climate thresholds, and these may signal the onset of accelerated change ahead," Vincent said Thursday.

If you don't know why you should care—rent the DVD "An Inconvenient Truth, then move to higher ground.

*Cricket Webb.*

**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)**

