



THE HOOTER

Hooter

EDITOR CRICKET WEBB

Behold, the great pigeon

A brief history of a reviled -- and revered -- bird.

By Andrew D. Blechman, Published January 31, 2007 LA Times. ANDREW D. BLECHMAN is the author of the just-published "Pigeons: The Fascinating Saga of the World's Most Revered and Reviled Bird" (Grove Atlantic).

WHAT ARE we going to do about the pigeons? Some Angelenos like to feed them in MacArthur Park or race them from their backyards. But just as many people are tired of scrapping droppings off their

(Continued on page 4)



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NEXT MEETING

Wild Wings: a Celebration of Northwest Birds, with a Focus on Owls and Woodpeckers

DATE THURSDAY March 15th **TIME** 7:00 PM
PLACE ELLENSBURG HIGH SCHOOL ROOM - 232

We invite you to enjoy an evening with award winning photographer, Paul Bannick, who specializes in the natural history of North America, with a special focus on his beloved Pacific Northwest.

An experienced naturalist and outdoor educator, Paul creates most of his images while kayaking, hiking, or snowshoeing. He combines his passion for wilderness conservation with his career, currently serving as Director of Development for Conservation Northwest, whose objective is to protect and connect the wild areas of the Pacific Northwest.

Paul will focus on the rich diversity of owls and woodpeckers that we are fortunate to have in the Pacific Northwest. Due to our great variety of habitats, 15 of the 19 owls and 13 of the 22 woodpeckers seen in North America can be found in the Pacific Northwest. Paul will share memorable images of most of these remarkable birds with us and look at their unique habitat requirements. His objective is to foster a sense of intimacy between the subject and the viewer with the ultimate goal of motivating conservation of habitat.

After graduation from the University of Washington, Paul worked successfully for 15 years in the computer software industry, beginning as one of the original 75 employees of the Aldus Corporation, and then for Adobe Systems, and Microsoft. A fourth generation Seattleite, Paul has spent most of his life in the Pacific Northwest studying and photographing our native flora and fauna. Paul is a significant photo contributor to Seattle Audubon's Birdnote program (www.birdnote.org), Conservation Northwest, Seattle Audubon, and the North Cascades Institute. More of Paul's photography can be found at www.paulbannick.com.

All Audubon meetings and field trips are open to the public, so please join us for Paul's incredible woodpecker and owl images and his stimulating discussion of habitat needs. Come at 7:00 for a brief monthly meeting followed by Mr. Bannick's presentation. Stay after the meeting for juice, treats and conversation.

KAS Field Trips

March 3rd: *First Saturday BirdWalk* at 8:00 at Irene Rinehart River Front Park. Meet at the bridge parking lot, wear clothes/shoes for the weather, and bring optics. It usually takes two to three hours of walking on uneven ground and a walking stick may be helpful. The general public is always welcome, so bring a friend along.

March 24th (Saturday)

Confluence Park—Horan Natural area.

State Park where the Wentachee and Columbia rivers meet with 97 acres of wonderfully birdy habitats. Bring binoculars and dress in layers, good shoes or boots, and bring lunch and liquid. Meet at **7:30 AM** west end of Super One parking lot to car pool (.20 cents/mile divided by all in the car). Cricket Webb leader. For more information call 674-4035 (please leave message, all calls are screened) - **NOTE THE TIME CHANGE**

March 23, 24, 25th (Friday through Sunday)

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival. This will be the 10th year and you should see lots of Sandhill

Cranes. (I understand that as many as 18,000 Sandhill pass over each year.) There are birding activities lined up for every interest. For info (509) 488-2802 ext. 100.

April 28th (Saturday) *Lower Crab Creek and Columbia National Wildlife Refuge.*

This is mostly an auto tour and in the past as many as 76 species have been observed. Marianne Gordon leader.

May 19 & 20th (Saturday - Sunday) *Goldendale/ Bickleton/Klickitat River.* Campout and may be a lot of driving but we should see a great variety of species. Steve Moore & Jan Demorest leaders.

June 9th: *Kayak on the Columbia River.*

Vantage north to Whiskey Dick along the west shore cliffs. Mark Benedict leader.

June 16th (Saturday) *TBA* Steve Hall leader

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

February's ***First Saturday BirdWalk*** was in the fog, the same weather that had been hanging around for about two weeks along with low temperatures in the 20's. But fourteen hardy souls, including a photographer from the ***Daily Record***, dodged the icy spots and found **twenty-two** species. This was the same number as last month in the ice, but some species were different. Birds were few and difficult to find, so each was a treasure in itself. Bald Eagles are still in the area, as is the Brown Creeper. Several flocks of Canada Geese flew over our heads, all in 'V' shape and rather mystical in the fog. However, the best sightings for the day were two--a chipper American Dipper singing and bathing while occasionally submerging itself, and a Great Horned Owl. Every month for four years we have looked for an owl, knowing one should be in the area, and Jeb finally spotted one. Close to the trunk of a cottonwood tree, it resembled a wad of leaves on a vine. Just a great sighting, and one that not all people saw as the cold weather was cause for some to leave early. Come join us next month for birds and camaraderie--even if you can only stay for part of the walk. GB

NE Ellensburg, Vantage and Crab Creek on February 10th by **Tuck Forsythe**

Saturday activities kept me busy, especially an Audubon trip. February outdoor field trips are a Spartan experience, but the ten nice people, and unusual birds, made the day worthwhile, at least in retrospect. During the day, we saw 54 bald eagles, mostly in trees digesting bovine afterbirth, eaten at first light of dawn, plus lucky ones having eaten an occasional dead deer, etc.

Legions of ducks are sitting on the Columbia River now, including our ID's of common loon, common golden-eye, horned grebe, and BOTH genders of Lesser Scaups, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, Red-heads and Canvasbacks. A final bonus: 6 white pelicans on a bank of the Columbia River--seems like such a southern bird, for winter here!

You know spring has arrived when the garden catalogs that have clogged your mail box are replaced by the Bird Festival flyers. Here is a list of some of them, including our own local Get Intimate with the Shrub Steppe Festival and a couple that have already come and gone this year.

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

Othello Washington

March 23th to 25th 2007

This will be the 10th year and you should see lots of Sandhill Cranes. (I understand that as many as 18,000 Sandhill pass over each year.) There are birding activities lined up for every interest.

For information please call 509-488-2802 ex100.

<http://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org/>

The most popular tour, *Crane and Burrowing Owl Viewing Tour* is being offered before and after the festival on March 17th & 31st & April 7th

"WINGS OVER WATER"

Northwest Birding Festival

Blaine, Birch Bay and Simiahmoo

March 31, 2007 9AM to 5 PM

This will be the 5th year of this one day festival that highlights the thousands of Brant Geese and other water fowl that stage in the northwest corner of our state.

Birch Bay Chamber at (360) 371-5004,

<http://www.washingtonbrant.org/events.html>

Olympic Peninsula BirdFest

Friday March 30 to Sunday April 1, 2007

Dungness River Audubon Center.

Sequim, Washington

Go and enjoy a bird watching vacation for beginners to experts, from leisurely strolls to active hikes. You can bird for a few hours, or all day ... from the dawn chorus to the evening owl prowling.

For more information, call 360-681-4076,

email: info@olympicbirdfest.org

John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival

April 13 – 15 2007

Burns, Oregon

76 E. Washington Street | Burns, OR 97720 |

(541) 573-2636

Email: info@migratorybirdfestival.com

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival

April 27th to 27th

Hoquiam Washington

If you have questions about the Shorebird Festival, call 1-800-303-8498

WWW.shorebirdfestival.com

Puget Sound Bird Fest in Edmonds

May 18th – 19th 2007

Edmonds Washington

For schedule and program questions: 425-771-0227

lider@ci.edmonds.wa.us

Leavenworth Spring Bird Festival

May 17th - 20th 2007

Leavenworth Washington

Chamber of Commerce at (509) 548-5807 or

www.leavenworth.org

e mail at birdfest@earthlink.net

Kettle Valley Songbird Festival

May 20th - 22nd

Republic Washington

For additional festival details or to register, call

509-775-0441 or e-mail the [loose-](mailto:loose-bluemoose@hotmail.com)

bluemoose@hotmail.com.

Get Intimate with the Shrub-Steppe

May 12th

Ellensburg WA

Kittitas Environmental Education Network

509-933-4842

keen@KittitasEE.net

Meadow Lark Festival

May 17th to 21st

Penticton B.C.

Phone: (250) 492-LARK (5275)

or 1-866-699-9453

E-mail: meadowlarkfestival@osca.org

REFERENCE FOR NEXT YEAR

Port Susan Snow Goose Festival

February 24 & 25 2007

Stanwood Washington

<http://www.snowgoosefest.org/>

Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival

February 3rd & 4th 2007

Rockport Washington

(360) 853-7283

email: befcoordinator@verizon.net

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cars. And they're not alone. The mayor of London has declared war on the pigeons of Trafalgar Square; Chicago has banned fanciers from keeping them as pets; the Army is working hard to evict them from its Times Square recruiting station.

Until a couple of years ago, when I began researching my book, I didn't care one way or the other about these ubiquitous urban icons. But the more I learned about these humble birds, the more I came to admire them.

Most of us find doves endearing but look on the lowly pigeon with disdain. Well, it may come as a surprise, but pigeons are doves — rock doves to be precise. Those beautiful white doves released at weddings? Pigeons. Noah's dove? A pigeon. Picasso? He wasn't drawing doves; he was painting pigeons. He even named his daughter "Paloma" — Spanish for pigeon.

Humankind has had a fascination with the pigeon since it was first domesticated about 10,000 years ago, shortly after our other best friend, the dog. In Mesopotamia, pigeons were worshiped as fertility goddesses. The ancient Egyptians used them to ferry information about the Nile's flood levels. Pigeons delivered the results of the first Olympics in 776 B.C., and more than 2,500 years later, they brought news to London of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo.

Not only did Solomon sing their praises, he used them to deliver critical messages, as did Julius Caesar, Hannibal and Genghis Khan. Ancient Rome was awash in pigeons, but the Romans didn't seem to mind — they took great delight in the birds.

Until the invention of the telegraph in the mid-1800s, the fastest and most reliable way to get a message anywhere was by pigeon. The famous marathon runner who brought news of Persia's defeat to Athens took most of the day to arrive and then died. A pigeon could have delivered the message in 20 minutes.

Julius Reuters built his news-gathering empire on the wings of pigeons in the 1850s, when he used a fleet of the fowl to carry news and stock prices between Brussels and Aachen, Germany, in two hours, beating trains by six hours. Not long after, Charles Darwin proved his theory of evolution using pigeons, which populate the entire first chapter of his "Origin of Species." (His editor prodded him to drop all that evolution nonsense and expand on the topic of pigeons. Darwin declined.)

One million pigeons served valiantly in the two world wars — delivering critical messages, passports and other dispatches — and were recognized for helping to save thousands of soldiers' lives. Even today, pigeons are used by many of the world's militaries to deliver critical messages. When communications are compromised by high-tech eavesdropping, or knocked out altogether, you can still rely on pigeons, which is exactly what Saddam Hussein supposedly did during the Persian Gulf War.

Coupled with this proud yet nearly forgotten history is the bird's unparalleled athletic abilities. Pigeons routinely fly 600-mile races — without stopping — and average 60 mph. More incredibly, in these races, they're flying home from a place they've never been. To put that into perspective, the very best racehorses sprint at about 40 mph around a closed track for just over a mile. Although typically thought of as a blue-collar sport, pigeon racers can count the queen of England as one of their own.

Once heralded as goddesses, war heroes and Olympians, pigeons are now best known for the damage they can do to a car's paint job. Seems a touch unfair, don't you think?

And contrary to pest control propaganda, pigeons carry no more diseases than humans do, and are even highly resistant to avian flu and West Nile virus. They are only as dirty as our cities, so we might consider looking in the mirror before picking on pigeons.



Common Pigeon

DORSE SCHNEBLY (1922 - 2007)

A charter member of Kittitas Audubon, Dorse Schnebly, died on January 6th of this year. Only declining years took Dorse from enjoying the outdoors in the hills and mountains of the Kittitas Valley. To know Dorse was to admire and love him, and our family was privileged to know Dorse and his wife, Peggy, for more than thirty years. He was a third generation rancher in the Fairview District with the family Bar Balloon brand the first registered in Washington State. Dorse's cattle were known as being the finest, a hint at his special feeling for his animals! Rounding up cattle on horseback from the Naneum Canyon to the Columbia River was one of his greatest joys, and, as he did so, he observed its natural history. He knew the birds, the plants, and especially the mushrooms--and he shared the knowledge with anyone near. The family suggested a fitting memorial to Dorse would be to plant a tree in his honor. Knowing this gentle man, we definitely agree.
Gloria Baldi

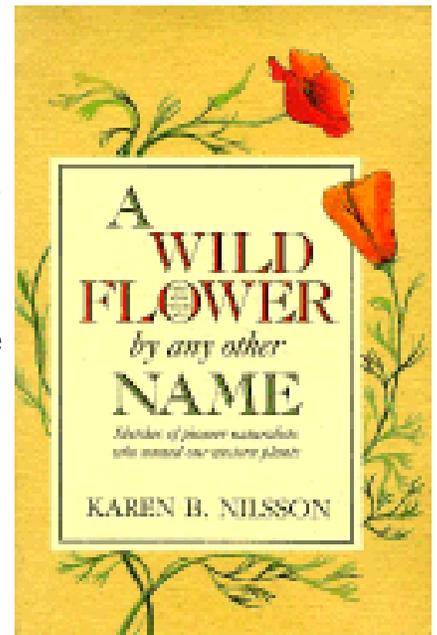
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

If you are a botanist, gardener, a preserver of flowers, or just one who loves to smell a flower, you may be interested in a small enjoyable paperback book titled **A Wild Flower by any other Name: Sketches of pioneer naturalists who named our western plants** by Karen B. Nilsson. The book, published in 1994, is one you can easily pick up and read for just a few minutes.

Botanists and collectors from the 1700's into the twentieth century are each profiled in a biographical sketch accompanied by a photograph and pencil sketch of the flower, bush or tree that today bears the name of the discoverer. Sometimes the name is a proper name, as in Douglas Fir named for David Douglas (1799-1834). But many times the scientific nomenclature has the discover's name, such as *Quercus Kelloggii*, the California Black Oak, named for Albert Kellogg (1813-1887).

All the species were discovered in the west and the process of naming a newly found plant is explained, as well as, the hardships under which the early collectors lived while in the field. Being educated and unique individuals, their lives were varied and their stories intriguing. The short biography of a particular collector may wet your desire to read his/her full account.

Author Karen Nilsson was an energetic individual who, not surprisingly, also enjoyed exploring the outdoors. A graduate of Stanford University, she has among her many accomplishments the formation of Environmental Volunteers, an organization that teaches hands-on natural science to elementary school children throughout the San Francisco peninsula. **A Wild Flower by any other Name** was published after her death from cancer by her husband and friends. A fascinating book to read. GB



*******HELP! HELP! VOLUNTEER NEEDED: KAS bylaws require a non-board member be on the nominating committee with two board members. Would you be willing to volunteer? If so, call Gloria @ 933-1558.*******

Hydroelectricity is electricity obtained from hydropower. Most hydroelectric power comes from the potential energy of dammed water driving a water turbine and generator, although less common variations use water's kinetic energy or dammed sources, such as tidal power. Hydroelectricity is a renewable energy source but is it a green source?

The major advantage of hydro systems is elimination of the cost of fuel and the attendant pollution. Hydroelectric plants are immune to price increases for fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas or coal, and do not require imported fuel. Hydroelectric plants tend to have longer lives than fuel-fired generation, with some plants now in service having been built 50 to 100 years ago. Operating labor cost is usually low since plants are automated and have few personnel on site during normal operation.

Reservoirs created by hydroelectric schemes often provide facilities for water sports, and become tourist attractions in themselves. Multi-use dams installed for irrigation, flood control, or recreation, may have a hydroelectric plant added with relatively low construction cost, providing a useful revenue stream to offset the cost of dam operation.

Disadvantages include but are not limited to the following. Hydroelectric projects can be disruptive to surrounding aquatic ecosystems. For instance, studies have shown that dams have reduced salmon populations by preventing access to spawning grounds upstream, even though most dams in salmon habitat have fish ladders installed. Salmon smolt are also harmed on their migration to sea when they must pass through turbines. This has led to some areas barging smolt downstream during parts of the year. Turbine and power-plant designs that are easier on aquatic life are an active area of research.

Generation of hydroelectric power impacts on the downstream river environment. Water exiting a turbine usually contains very little suspended sediment,

which can lead to scouring of river beds and loss of riverbanks. Since turbines are often opened intermittently, rapid or even daily fluctuations in river flow are observed. For example, in the Grand Canyon, the daily cyclic flow variation caused by Glen Canyon Dam was found to be contributing to erosion of sand bars. Dissolved oxygen content of the water may change



GLEN CANYON DAM ** Image take April 2004 by Daniel Mayer

from pre-construction conditions. Water exiting from turbines is typically much colder than the pre-dam water, which can change aquatic faunal populations. In addition to the loss of the riparian habitat due to the inundation of the reservoir, the flow variation results in the loss of downstream riparian habitat.

The reservoirs of hydroelectric power plants in tropical regions may produce substantial amounts of methane and carbon dioxide. This is due to plant material in flooded areas decaying in an anaerobic environment, and forming methane, a very potent greenhouse gas. According to the World Commission on Dams report, where the reservoir is large compared to the generating capacity (less than 100 watts per square meters of surface area) and no clearing of the forests in the area was undertaken prior to impoundment of the reservoir, greenhouse gas emissions from the reservoir may be higher than those of a conventional oil-fired thermal generation plant. In boreal reservoirs of Canada and Northern Europe, however, greenhouse gas emissions are typically only 2 to 8% of any kind of conventional thermal generation. The contributive effect of forest decay can be mitigated by a new class of underwater logging operation targeting drowned forests.

Is this a green source? Not really, but as the research is showing, on a large scale none of the choices are as green as they might seem at first look. Cricket

Source: Wikipedia

HOOTER

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

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Make check payable to Kittitas Audubon Society

Clip coupon and send with your check to:

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 P.O. Box 1443
 Ellensburg WA 98926

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Make check payable to National Audubon Society

Clip coupon and send with your check to:

National Audubon Society Chapter Code Y22
 Chapter Membership Data Center 7XBP
 P.O. Box 51001
 Boulder CO. 80322-1001

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.
 Webmaster – Mark Whitesell Email markwhitesell@hotmail.com

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 many owls and woodpeckers can you see in the pacific northwest?
2. On which field trip was a Great Horned Owl seen recently ?
3. How many Washington birds festivals could you go to this month?
4. What is Paloma in English?
5. What sport does the Queen of England participate in that is usually consider a blue collar sport not a blue blood sport?
6. What is the Latin name for the California Black Oak?



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)

