



KITITTAS AUDUBON SOCIETY

November 2007

THE HOOTER

Hooter

EDITOR CRICKET WEBB

THANKSGIVING BIRD COUNT

Yes it is that time of year again. As we settle in for the winter, so do the birds. Now it is time to take stock of who all came back this year. I am beginning to look for the Varied Thrush and all the Chickadees and Nuthatches. I am pleased to see that I have a larger flock of Mourning Doves this year. There is a sound from my childhood that I find very comforting and as exciting as it is to catch a glimpse of the Goshawk that hunts them and the Quail, I'm glad they are thriving here in my yard.

This year I have included the form and instructions for doing a Thanksgiving bird count on page 3. Take an hour and contribute to the citizen science. Give thanks for the bounty of beauty that flies into your yard every day. Cricket

NEXT MEETING - California Condors

DATE	THURSDAY 11/15	TIME	7:00 PM
PLACE	ELLENSBURG HIGH SCHOOL ROOM - 232	Enter via Third Avenue	

Sanford R. "Sandy" Wilbur was leader of the California Condor research and recovery effort from 1969 to 1981, the period during which the current captive breeding and release program was developed. Using color slides and readings from his recent book, "Condor Tales: What I Learned in Twelve Years with the Big Birds," he describes how the condors became endangered and how the condors came to be taken from the wild for a captive breeding program. The "Tales" are a fascinating blend of biology, sociology and politics, and the presentation sheds light on what it really takes to save an endangered species.

"Thanks so much for the fascinating insights of your contributions to the condor saga... Good reading, and an important point of view... I've reread it all and congratulate you on a very good tale. Your frank assessments were refreshing and produced several good laughs." - Roland C. Clement, Vice-president, National

Audubon Society (retired)
Sandy Wilbur was born in Oakland, California, in 1940 and graduated from Humboldt State College in Wildlife Management. After a short period with the California Department of Fish and Game, he spent the next 34 years with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, about half that time managing national wildlife refuges in the West and Southeast, and the other half with the Endangered Species Program. In addition to the California Condor, his endangered species work has included rails, terns, vireos, spotted owls, and Hawaiian birds. He has written many scientific papers and several books, including "Condor Tales," "Birds of Baja California, Mexico," and "Vulture Biology and Management." Currently, he and his wife Sally live in Oregon in the winter, and New Hampshire in the summer. All Audubon meetings and field trips are open to the public, so feel free to come and meet with us. Stay after the meeting for juice, treats and conversation.

To contact the editor or to submit articles.

Email kashooter@kittitasaudubon.org.

Please use Cricket at the beginning of the subject line

November 3rd: First Saturday BirdWalk at Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park bridge parking lot at 8:00 am. Leaves have dropped, so the birds may be easier to find. This is a walk of about 2.5 hours on uneven ground. Dress for the weather, bring optics and a friend. Open to the public as are all KAS activities.

November 4th: 8:00 AM **Saddle Mountains** above the Hanford Reach to look for the Gray-crowned Rosy Finch. Call 933-1558 for details. (Note Daylight Savings clock set-back this day.)

December 1st: First Saturday BirdWalk (see details above)

December 15th Christmas Bird Count

Many of you know that teams of people cover a 15 mile diameter circle in Ellensburg, no matter what the weather, to count every species and group of birds they see, and at the end of the day, enjoy a potluck to hear reports. Phil Mattocks is the organizer for this event, compiles the statistics for National Audubon, and will be contacting the people who have covered a specific area in years past to verify that you will be doing so again this year. However, if you have never been involved and would like to join a group, please call Gloria Baldi at 933-1558 no later than December 7th.

January 5th: First Saturday BirdWalk (see details above)

January 12th: Location to be determined.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

First Saturday BirdWalk on October 6th, the end of five years of our monthly walk, found 13 pair of eyes searching Irene Riverfront Park for feathered species. The weather was about 60 degrees, sunny with occasional overcast and a bit of a chilly wind. The occasion was made special when Don Wooldridge surprised us with donuts to celebrate our 5 years. What fun! For the morning walk, seventeen species were recorded, with the Western Grebe found for only the second time in five years (both in the month of October), as well as, our second Great Horned Owl.

In five years, we have seen a total of 97 species. Some birds, like the Black-capped Chickadee, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker and Downy Woodpecker have been found most every month. Some species have been found only once, such as, MacGillivray's, Nashville, and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird, Townsend's Solitaire, Pygmy Nuthatch, Northern Shrike, Common Nighthawk, Greater Yellowlegs, Semi-palmated Plover, Hooded Merganser, Common Goldeneye, and the Redhead Duck, Cinnamon Teal, Spotted Towhee, Swainson's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, and surprisingly, a White-crowned Sparrow.

Migratory patterns have been easy to note with some species. We always see the Yellow Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Swallows, Osprey, House Wren, as well as others in the summer. Ring-necked Ducks and American Dipper are winter residents, although for our first two years the Dipper nested under the footbridge as one enters the trail.

Steve Moore, who has compiled our sightings, noted that common birds to Kittitas Valley, like the House Sparrow, Rock Pigeon, White-crowned Sparrow, Spotted Towhee and Am. Coot took a long time to record, from 1.5 to 4 years. One can speculate on the reasons.

Gloria Baldi

(Continued on page 4)

ROBINS ROBINS ROBIN

The chokecherries are ripe and the bushes are filled with robins putting on fat for the winter. It must be sticky business because there is a line-up for baths at my pond. There will be as many as four in it at one time with a half dozen or more hanging around waiting for their turn.

Marianne Gordon

October 20th Field Trip--Ponds and Raptors

EXCEPTIONAL day for the October 20th field trip to local ponds and roads to view raptors! We woke to thick fog, 32 degrees with frost, and opening day of upland game birds, as well as, deer & elk season.

The first pond was at the corner of Berry and Tjossum Roads (some call it Sorenson and some refer to it as the Bull pond). At first it appeared to be empty with only a lone Northern Harrier kiting about the surrounding fields. But peering through the thick fog, we found ducks and grebes, i.e., Ring-necked ducks, American Coots, Pied-billed and Western Grebes. With a 'fog-piercing scope' we may have found more.

Pond #2 was Tjossum pond where we found Mallards, Belted Kingfisher and another Pied-billed Grebe. Across the tracks to Hansen's Pond, very quiet in the fog with the colorful trees, we found four Wilson's Snipe, looking more like rocks than birds. All flew when we tried to get a closer look.

The Woodhouse Loop Ponds were empty. Perhaps a hunter was there before us.

The fourth stop was Blue Herron (sic) Pond where one small female duck flew before it could be identified. Next was McCabe pond, still fog-bound, but around to the north, were again the two species of Grebes, with the fog allowing us very close looks at the elegant Western Grebe. A real surprise was a small flock of Wood Ducks. (Could that be a result of the duck box the chapter installed several years back?)

On the way to Fiorito Ponds, we spied Redwing and Brewer's Blackbirds mixed in with the hundreds of Starlings. Not much but Coots at the lakes, but we did spot a number of Red-tailed Hawks. One more look at Tjossem Pond on our way to Elk Heights via I-90, found us a flock of Wigeon.

The old burn at Elk Heights in the past has produced Black-backed woodpeckers. Trudging up the hill, we found nothing for a while--but then deer (a two point buck with a doe), 20 Wild Turkeys, and suddenly we were surrounded by birds—many Western Bluebirds and a few Mountain Bluebirds, Gold-finches, Steller's Jay, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Juncos, White Breasted Nuthatches, and Hairy Woodpeckers (three in one tree). We did not find the Black-backed, and when someone mentioned lunch we headed for town. By this time the fog was gone and the fall colors enhanced our return.

Raptors for the day included approximately 20 Red-tailed Hawks and several American Kestrels. Total species count for the four hours was 36. An absolutely EXCEPTIONAL day! Jeb

A Different Dipper Behavior

We usually associate Dippers with fast flowing water, clinging to rocks, or maybe working a moss covered surface in the spray created by a waterfall. This is a different look.

In October 06, Marilyn and I were at our cabin above lake Wenatchee, on the Napeequa river. The river was at its lowest flow, moving slowly and quietly between pools. As we crossed a bridge above it and looked down, we spotted a Dipper sitting on a partially submerged log preening. It continued preening for a short time, and then hopped into the water and paddled around like a duck, picking food from the water surface. It then proceeded to tip, bottom up (like a duck) and reach down into the water and gather food, and finally it did dive down and walk on the sandy bottom of the pool foraging, before returning to the log and preening again.

Action at October Board Meeting

- Contact Marianne Gordon if you are interested in participating in a Thanksgiving Bird Count.
- The board is still concerned over the Wildhorse Wind Project.
- The board is active in the effort to defeat the Keechelus Ridge Development proposal. This is to preserve the wildlife corridor across I-90.
- The board voted to sign on to the Forest Law Center's letter to expand the lawsuit against Weyerhaeuser's logging within spotted owl circles.
- Joe Meuchel is recovering from his two hip replacements.

Step one: Food

Food Sources Everyone needs to eat! Planting native forbs, shrubs, and trees is the easiest way to provide the foliage, nectar, pollen, berries, seeds, and nuts that many species of wildlife require to survive and thrive.

Native plants Native plants are adapted to local conditions and are easier to grow and maintain. This low-maintenance approach means savings, in both time and money. Once established, native plants better withstand variations in local climate such as droughts and freezes. Native wildflowers are mainly perennials or self-sowing biennials, so they take care of the next year's planting themselves. They tend not to run amok, however, and invade natural habitats the way exotic invasive plants often do.

Native plants are better for the environment than exotic plants, generally requiring less fertilizer and other additives, less water, and less effort in pest control. Besides cutting down on the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and air- (and noise-) polluting mowers and other equipment, native plant gardens benefit the environment in other ways: They stabilize soil and reduce erosion; they more effectively filter storm water than exotic plantings, thus improving water quality; and they promote biodiversity, offering the food, nectar, cover, and nesting areas that local birds, butterflies, and mammals need. *ea-ture.com*

Native Plants for Central Washington

Just a few suggestions of native shrubs for the backbone of your garden.

Common Juniper

(*Juniperus communis*)

Evergreen

Western Serviceberry

(*Amelanchier alnifolia*)

The birds will have to share with us.

Oregon-grape

(*Mahonia aquifolium*)

Gold flowers and purple berries.

Blue Elderberry

(*Sambucus nigra ssp. caerulea*)

Grows fast from seeds dropped by birds.

Snowberry

(*Symphocarpus albus*)

Restrained height but spreads with underground roots.

Chokecherry

(*Prunus virginiana*)

Favorite of migrating robins

Red-osier Dogwood

(*Cornus stolonifera*)

Winter red.

Hummingbirds and Butterflies

There are many lists of flowers for hummingbirds. You probably have some already. Think tubes. And they are all welcome in your gardens for summer color.

The first one the hummingbirds hit in the spring in my yard is flowering quince.

Butterflies like lilacs, lavender, lilies, coneflowers, monarda, valerian and many more.

NOTE: Beware of generic hummingbird/butterfly seed mixes. They often contain things we do not want introduced to our environment. Better to buy flowers seeds individually by name

These are just a start.

[Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest](#) by Arthur Krukeberg is a good reference. Be careful that you aren't choosing a plant that only grows in the milder climate west of the Cascades.

High Country Gardens (www.highcountrygardens.com) specializes in xeriscape garden plants that require little or no added water, ideal for our "rain shadow" location. Call for a catalog (1-800-925-9387) for a place to start your planning.

eNaturecom (http://www.enature.com/native_invasive/) has a long list of recommended native garden plants for Washington with a complete description of each plant. It's a good reference to bookmark.

Marianne Gordon

I couldn't have put it any better. From Seattle Times 10/2/07

Tuesday, October 2, 2007 - Page updated at 02:00 a.m.

Sandhill cranes dance and honk by the hundreds and thousands each spring in a place called Crab Creek, near the very center of Washington. State officials propose to build a dam that will destroy this place: Lower Crab Creek tops the list for new dams in Washington.

Quietly, state officials are moving the decision to Washington, D.C., where Congress may soon decide whether to fund studies to commit taxpayers to billions of dollars in new dam construction. So, let's spend a moment on Crab Creek.

Where is Crab Creek? From Seattle, drive Interstate 90, cross the Columbia River at Vantage, take the exit and drive south for eight miles. Here, Crab Creek — more than 140 miles long and draining a vast area — flows into the Columbia, near Beverly and Schwana, Grant County.

If your image of Crab Creek is sterile Eastern Washington desert, reconsider. Lower Crab Creek is among the Northwest's richest wildlife habitats: 19,000 acres designated as Columbia National Wildlife Refuge and Washington state Lower Crab Creek Wildlife Area.

The Columbia National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1944 as a feature of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project "for use as an inviolate sanctuary ... for migratory birds" and "as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife," including more than 150 species of birds.

Crab Creek also provides important habitat for migrating salmon. As the Northwest Power and Conservation Council writes: "Crab Creek Subbasin offers enormous opportunity to conduct fisheries enhancement to help mitigate for other fisheries that have been lost." Crab Creek provides spawning habitat for a summer/fall chinook salmon population that "returns to spawn in Red Rock Coulee year after year." Endangered summer-run steelhead also spawn in Lower Crab Creek. Rainbow trout are present throughout the creek and provide high-quality fisheries.

Washington's proposed Crab Creek Dam would cost \$2.7 billion and flood tens of thousands of acres of wetlands, streams, lakes and shrub-steppe habitat. The dam would also flood up to 8,600 acres of existing farmland, requiring the state to use its eminent domain powers to condemn private property.

Why are elected officials pushing new dams? Their stated purposes are to provide water to industrial farms along the Columbia River; and, "augment" streamflow in the Columbia River for the benefit of endangered salmon.

Flooding farms in Lower Crab Creek to provide water to

farmers elsewhere makes no sense. Nor does it make sense to flood out critical fishery habitat under the guise of helping migrating salmon — not to mention the water-quality problems that would occur when solar-heated, chemical-laden slackwater from Crab Creek Reservoir is released into the Columbia.

More than 500 people attend the popular Othello Crane Festival every spring and the town of Othello gets an economic lift from this marvelous gathering of thousands of sandhill cranes. These folks (kids, too) will be sick at heart if we build a huge dam that floods the Crab Creek wetlands. Where will the cranes go then?

With a \$2.7 billion price tag, Crab Creek Dam is a bad deal all the way around. Farmers will never be able to pay the dam's cost, so you, the taxpayer, will pay.

A dam at Crab Creek would result in a tragic loss of wildlife, including the dancing and honking sandhill cranes. Wildlife can't talk to Congress. You can. Pick up the phone and tell your representatives to oppose new dams in Eastern Washington.

Estella Leopold is an emeritus professor with the University of Washington Department of Biology. She is the daughter of Aldo Leopold, considered the father of wildlife management and the country's wilderness system. Rachael Paschal Osborn is executive director of the Center for Environmental Law and Policy, with offices in Spokane, Seattle and Olympia.

The Kittitas Audubon Board invited Ken Hammond to come and speak to the board last August on this subject. If you are interested in the complete transcript of his lecture, please contact me and I will send it to you. It is far too long to print here but it is an excellent in depth treatise on why this is a VERY bad idea.

One ironic note from Ken. The officials pushing this plan have stated that there will be land set aside for mitigation for the lost of the crab creek habitat. The ironic part is that Crab Creek and the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge was set aside as mitigation for the Rocky Reach Dam.

Cricket

HOOTER

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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
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KITTITAS COUNTY BUSINESSES SUPPORTING KAS



Inland Internet, Roslyn, Donates internet service for our Website:

<http://www.kittitasaudubon.org>

Old Mill Country Store, Ellensburg

Provides a discount on bird seed to KAS members and prints our county bird lists.



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.

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