



KITITTAS AUDUBON SOCIETY

JANUARY 2008

THE HOOTER

Hooter

EDITOR CRICKET WEBB

SPOTTED OWL RECOVERY PLAN

It is impossible to condense the issue of the Spotted Owl. This is not going to cover even the most superficial data about, what is arguably, the most studied bird ever.

There are legions of Biologist, Ornithologists, and forest conservations that have dedicated their entire careers to learn how to help the Northern Spotted Owl. NOT just survive or just slow the extinction but to recover. The Endangered Species Act requires that every federal agency have a recovery plan. The mascot of our Audubon Chapter, the Spotted Owl has been on the Endangered Species list since 1990 without one. Hold your head up, you are part of the solution. Your Chapter, Kittitas Audubon Society has been, along with Seattle Audubon and Audubon Washington engaged in an extended effort involving lawsuits and injunctions to get a plan in place.

In the last year a draft plan was offered up. It is a huge disappointment. A group of independent scientists, requested by and paid for by the USFW has concluded that the proposed recovery plan for the northern spotted owl was "deeply flawed." Understatement.

The plan would actually reduce the limited protections put in place with the Forest Recovery Plan (1994) by the Clinton Administration. In a letter written by Earth Justice on behalf of Kittitas Audubon Society, and numerous others, the failure to base the recovery plan on current science is detailed.

The ESA states that the FWS "shall, to the maximum extent practicable," incorporate into the recovery plan "objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination .*of recov-*

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NEXT MEETING

Title

DATE THURSDAY 1/17/2008 **TIME** 7:00 PM
PLACE ELLENSBURG HIGH SCHOOL ROOM - 232

If you have gone through Ellensburg on the freeway any time in the last year or so, you have seen the Solar Array east of I-90.

Gary Nystedt will be talking about solar power as one of many alternatives to reduce green house gasses. The presentation will be about our local array and the

local efforts to conserve as well as solar power in general. There are new developments all the time.

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

Field Trips

January 5th First Saturday BirdWalk Irene Rinehart Park 8:00 AM: Bridge Parking lot.. Start the New Year with a walk in the winter wild. Is it surprising what we find at this time of the year. Dress warm, bring optics, bird guide and a friend Kittitas Audubon events are open to the public.

January 12th Winter Birdfeeder Tour. We will tour Eastern Kittitas County and visit five homes to see how each attract and feed birds. Limited to 12 participants. Call Gloria or Jeb to sign up 933-1558.

January 19th Yakima area and Yakima River south to Sunnyside, bring lunch, warm clothes, optics and a friend. Meet at 8:00 AM to carpool at west end of Super 1 parking lot. Jan and Steve are the leaders: call for details 933-1179.

Please remember we car pool to save gas and socialize as we search for birds. Car-pool fee is 30 cents/ mile divided by the number of people in the auto. We do thank those who drive! Jeb

2008 FIELD TRIPS

- 2/2** First Saturday BirdWalk: Cricket
2/23 NE Kittitas Valley to Columbia River; Gloria & Jeb
3/1 First Saturday BirdWalk: Gloria & Jeb
3/26-3/28 Sandhill Crane Festival in Othello WA. Othello Chamber of Commerce 509-488-2802
4/5 First Saturday BirdWalk: Gloria & Jeb
4/26 Crab Creek and Columbia National Wildlife Refuge: Marianne Gordon
5/3 First Saturday BirdWalk: Tom Gauron
5/17-5/18 Klickitat River country (overnight): Limited space - Jan & Steve 933-1179
6/7 First Saturday BirdWalk: Gloria & Jeb
6/21 Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge & Ft Simcoe: Gloria & Jeb
6/28 Hummingbirds of Upper Kittitas County: Cricket Webb
7/5 First Saturday BirdWalk: Gloria & Jeb
12/7 Taneum/Quartz Mt/Manastash Loop: Gloria & Jeb
8/2 First Saturday BirdWalk: Gloria & Jeb
9/6 First Saturday BirdWalk: Gloria & Jeb

Field Trip report

Field trip reports

December 1, 2007: First Saturday BirdWalk. No wind with a skiff of new snow added to the 3 to 5 inches we received during the week, and low clouds, temp in the mid 20's, with a group of eight faithful walkers and watchers, we did the BirdWalk. The day began slowly; maybe the birds were sleeping in. However, the more we searched the more birds we found, totaling 21 species for the 2.5 hours on foot. Some birds that were more exciting were: Brown Creeper, both Kinglets, Bald Eagles, Sharp-shinned hawk, and on the gravel bars of the river, Common Snipe and Killdeers feeding and resting together. Could it be for safety? Good day, good people and great birds. What could be better? Jeb

OTHER THINGS TO DO

ALEUTIAN GOOSE FESTIVAL MARCH 28-30

Come celebrate Spring and the return of the once endangered Aleutian Geese to the extreme northern coast of California at the 10th Annual Aleutian Goose Festival. **March 28-30 2008** in Crescent City/Del Norte County, CA. Located in the home of Redwood National Park and the Smith River National Recreation area, the festival offers 60+ workshops/fieldtrips, Native American Heritage, birds-birds-birds, Spotted Owl, Marbled Murrelets, Pelagic trip, Smith River Drifts, Geology, Botany and more... To see it all...www.aleutiangoosefestival.org.

GODWIT DAYS APRIL 18-20

Join the flock at the 13th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival **April 18-20, 2008** at the Arcata Community Center in Arcata, CA. Pre-and post-festival events are offered to extend your birding enjoyment. Choose from over 100 field trips and workshops and browse the vendors at the bird fair. An extraordinary birding adventure awaits you between the redwoods and Humboldt Bay! Go to www.godwitdays.com for more details and to register on-line.

Reuters September 26th edition carried an intriguing story by Ben Hirschler that may explain how birds unerringly find their way to and from their winter and summer haunts. Over the years various theories have investigated sun, star and landmass position recognition, but the work done by Dominik Heyers at the University of Oldenburg in Germany has shown that magnetic sensing molecules called cryptochromes within the eye are a possible key. They appear to stimulate photoreceptors depending on the orientation of the magnetic field. This suggests migratory birds perceive the magnetic field as a pattern within their visual field that provides guidance in flight.

Research was based on studies of the garden warbler, which are estimated to number around 10 million worldwide. They breed in northern Europe and spend the winter in Africa.

Condensed version of Reuters' link; Don Wooldridge Oct, 2007

WILD BIRD/GAME BLOCKS: The Old Mill Country Store sells 25 pound blocks of wild game feed. KAS members have found them especially useful in winter when they leave for a few days. The cost is 8.32/blk. Since they are 'glued' with molasses, you will probably want them under some cover. Give them a try.

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ery>.. that the species be removed from the list."

The Draft Plan is fatally flawed for at least the following reasons.

1. No connection between habitat and species' recovery
2. Reduced habitat protection
3. Barred owl priority unjustified
4. Suitable habitat targets arbitrarily chosen
5. Non-federal lands omitted
6. Failure to consider global warming
7. Does not address inadequate existing regulatory mechanisms
8. Failure to address dispersal habitat

The 16 page letter (inadequately summarized in this small space), concludes the Draft Northern Spotted Owl Plan should be withdrawn and "convene a group of recognized and scientifically well-qualified spotted owl biologists and population dynamic scientists and similar scientific experts and allow them to develop a scientifically and legally credible draft recovery plan for review and comment.

Les Blumenthal's (McClatchy Newspapers) article titled "**Protection plan for owls not worth a hoot?**" explains how the conclusion of the peer review fueled allegations that the draft plan was manipulated by political appointees in Washington who were determined to boost logging in Northwest forests.

The review has attracted attention on Capitol Hill. Democratic lawmakers will ask Interior Secretary

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Travel with EF Educational this summer~~Vienna, Venice, and Paris for 10 days~~also visiting Salzburg, Tyrol, Innsbruck, and Florence. If you are interested contact Steve and Linda Hall at 925.4877. Adults~~\$3000, younger than 24~~\$2700---this price includes everything except lunch each day.

Dirk Kempthorne to appoint a committee to write a new recovery plan.

"We are especially concerned the peer review has produced unanimous findings that the draft recovery plan is not based on the best available science and will not ensure recovery of the species," the letter says.

"The politics trumped the science, and independent scientists have now blown the whistle," said Rep. Jay Inslee. Fish and Wildlife Service officials declined to comment on the peer review of the recovery plan, conducted by the Society of Conservation Biology and the American Ornithologists' Union.

"We aren't done yet," said Joan Jewett, a spokeswoman for the Fish and Wildlife Service's regional office in Portland, Ore. "We want the final plan to be based on the best science."

A final recovery plan is expected to be released next spring, Jewett said.

The spotted owl, protected under the Endangered Species Act in 1990, became a symbol for efforts to halt logging in the old-growth forests of the Northwest. By some estimates, 80 to 90 percent of the region's old-growth has already been cut.

The draft recovery plan identified competition from the barred owl as the primary threat facing the spotted owl, not the loss of habitat, as previously thought. The barred owl isn't native to the Northwest but has moved west from the eastern United States as the forests have been logged. The barred owl is less selective in its habitat than the spotted owl and more aggressive than its cousin in competing for habitat and food.

But the unidentified scientists who conducted the peer review said that basing the recovery plan on eliminating barred owls was unsupported by scientific studies.

Another scientist said that while other factors could affect the spotted owls, they are "at risk of extinction" because of habitat loss.

Still another said that the draft recovery plan "significantly weakened" previous owl recovery efforts and that "it's not hard to conclude" that the latest proposal reflected "pressure to relax restrictions on logging."

In a spirit of full disclosure, here is an article that explains how the Barred Owl plays into this picture. I am of the opinion that the Barred Owl is just opportunistic and moving into area where spotted owls are not currently nesting. This is an ongoing debate but one where the debate could be detrimental to the Spotted Owl.

BARRED OWLS ARE HERE

SPOTTED OWLS NOT HAPPY

Jim Briggs

Invasive species of microbes, plants, and animals are changing ecosystems in a biological upheaval that may affect almost everything that lives. The cause of the upheaval is the human species. Life on the planet is being homogenized by the expanding human population and the frequent and rapid movement of people and goods, which carry invasive organisms with them. These invasives often flourish in their new ecosystems because...they have escaped their predators.

The above quote is by Richard Preston in an article on the damage being done to hemlock trees by the introduced woolly adelgid and was in the New Yorker on December 10, 2007. It refers to the almost always-disastrous effect on the new environment when an exotic arrives. The interesting part is his reference to the homogenization of the world as a result of movement of living things, often facilitated by human activity.

We have an example right here in the Pacific Northwest, only the invasive species is not an overseas alien. It is the Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) and is native to eastern North America. However its

movement across the country was possibly facilitated by human land use activities, such as extensive logging in southern Canada.

The Barred Owl has now collided with its close relative, the Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*) and the Spotted Owl is suffering from the impact. Apparently at some time in the distant past the two relatives were separated by geography and habitat requirements. The Barred being more of a generalist and the Spotted specializing in what we now call old growth forest.

The Barred Owl was confined to Eastern United States and Canada south of the boreal forest and part of Mexico, but beginning in the mid 1900's it has steadily been moving west. It now co-occupies all of the range of the Northern Spotted Owl and much of the range of the California Spotted Owl. It is not clear if the expansion is natural or human-caused but human activity has been such a force of nature, that it almost certainly had an effect.

There is a rule in ecology that states that no two species can occupy the same niche at the same time. I can't remember the name of the rule since I took ecology 40 years ago but I assume the principle is still in effect. Having Barred Owls in the neighborhood should normally not be a problem for the Spotted Owls because there will likely be some kind of difference in behavior or habitat preference that separates them. But apparently the only difference is that the Barred Owl is slightly larger and more aggressive and it can live in the old growth habitat of the Spotted Owl, as well as in more open forest and riparian habitat.

R. J. Guterrez, a leading Owl researcher, believes that the larger barred owl will be detrimental to the Spotted Owl because they do not segregate by habitat. Therefore they are true competitors and the larger size of the Barred Owl gives it the competitive advantage. They are also more aggressive in interactions with Spotted Owls and often drive them out of the area. They can also hybridize but it is not common. Guterrez feels the Barred Owl is one of the threats to survival of the Spotted Owl along with habitat destruction.

Now researchers are considering experiments in controlling Barred Owls in an attempt to see if recovery is practical. This could involve selective killing or sterilization of Barred Owls or better yet, habitat management that could help the Spotted Owls. It is quite likely that logging of old growth forests has favored the expansion of Barred Owls. Guterrez feels we have a conservation conundrum here, where a native species is being overtaken by another native species that has expanded its range westward, albeit possibly with human help. We should test the feasibility and desirability of controlling the expansion of the Barred Owl before formulating management plans.

There is a danger here that the forest harvest interests will seize upon the Barred Owl invasion as the reason for Spotted Owl decline rather than old growth forest removal. The truth is that logging the old growth forest is reducing the livable habitat of the Spotted Owl and the Barred Owl is exploiting it because they are not absolutely dependent on old growth forests.

An interesting sidelight is that the westward expansion of the Barred Owl occurred at roughly the same time as the eastward expansion of the Coyote (*Canis latrans*). Today it is recognized as a subspecies called the Eastern Coyote. They perhaps passed each other somewhere in Alberta.

Step 3: Cover and Places to Raise Young.

Places for Cover

Wildlife require places to hide in order to feel safe from people, predators, and inclement weather. They also need a sheltered place to raise their offspring.

The easiest way to provide cover for terrestrial wildlife is by using native vegetation, both dead and alive. Many shrubs, thickets, and brush piles provide great hiding places within their bushy leaves and thorns. It is not necessary to "clean" under your shrubs. Birds such as towhees and quail make a living scratching around in leaf litter.

Dead trees are home to lots of different animals, including some that provide food to woodpeckers and other species, and other wildlife that use tree cavities and branches for nesting and perching.

You can create hiding places for animals by using logs, brush or rocks. A brush pile can be tucked away in one corner of your yard. It's out of sight but wildlife will find it.

Put up birdhouses made for the types of birds you would like to attract to your habitat. A roosting box for bats will give them a place to rest and/or raise their young in between their evening outings to catch insects.

Ponds provide cover for aquatic wildlife, including fish and amphibians. If you have a pond, you are already providing cover and places to raise young.

From <http://www.enature.com/>

Creating a Toad Adobe

A simple water and cover feature for amphibians.

1. Get a medium-size clay pot and saucer from a garden center.
2. Put the saucer on the ground and keep it filled with water.
3. Nearby, put the pot upside-down with an edge resting on a rock. That makes room for a toad to fit through and hide inside. (If you have a broken pot with a chunk missing at the rim, you have an abode with an instant doorway--no need to prop it up.)
4. Watch for night visitors.

Some of the above material from <http://www.nwf.org/backyard/>

More resources at <http://www.enature.com/gardening/>

Marianne Gordon

If you are interested in adding native plant to your yard, an inexpensive source is the Kittitas County Conservation District's annual plant sale. The 11th annual Roy Bachman Memorial Plant Sale starts taking orders just at the first of the year. The plants are available for pick up in the spring.

The Roy Bach Memorial Conservation Plant Sale is an annual fundraiser conducted by the Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD). The proceeds go toward scholarships for educational materials and transportation costs for natural resource field trips, agricultural farm tours, and other related educational activities for local youth. Our goal is to educate the leaders of tomorrow about the importance of natural resources and to direct them toward becoming responsible land stewards.

You can order on-line at http://www.kccd.net/Roy_Bach_Plant_Sale/Plant_Sale.htm

I ordered Elderberry, Serviceberry and Currants last year, most are surviving and will become shelter and food for my feathered neighbors in the years to come Cricket

HOOTER

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_____ 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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Make check payable to National Audubon Society

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National Audubon Society Chapter Code Y22
 Chapter Membership Data Center 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 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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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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[Http://www.kittitasaudubon.org](http://www.kittitasaudubon.org)

