Amy Hoover will bring photos and stories from her time working as a naturalist and guide for sea kayaking, natural history, and whale watching tours in Baja Mexico from 1986 through 1994 as well as photos from more recent visits. Venues include Espiritu Santo, Isla Carmen, Isla San Jose, and other islands in the Sea of Cortez, known for the great biodiversity and unique indigenous flora and fauna as described in John Steinbeck's book, "Log from the Sea of Cortez". Additionally, she will highlight birds and whales from Magdalena Bay on the Pacific coast of the peninsula, including up close and personal interactions with California Grey Whales who migrate to Magdalena Bay to birth.

All Audubon meetings, held on the 3rd Thursday of each month, September through May (except December), are open to the public, so feel free to come and meet with us. A brief business session precedes the program. Stay afterwards for juice, treats and conversation.

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**WELCOME TO THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT OF 2009!**  
Want to know how to participate?  
It’s as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes during February 13 ~ 16, 2009. Count birds at as many places and on as many days as you like—just keep a separate list of counts for each day and/or location.

2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time, and write it down. You can get a regional bird checklist from [http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/checklist](http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/checklist)

3. Enter your results at [http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/input](http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/input)

That's it! We'll look forward to receiving your counts.

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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.
Did y’all notice the cute little owl on the masthead? Just trying to get your attention! There is a new logo owl being incubated, but until it hatches, perhaps we’ll have a new owl every month ……. Happy Valentine’s Day!

The Editor

Local News: Survival Strategy 12-28-08

Yesterday, Hawky Locky flew over and of course all the feeder birds flew away. All, that is, except this little Red-breasted Nuthatch, which quickly positioned itself up against the lid of the feeder and froze. “Nutty” stayed in this position for some time before the “all clear” alarm rang.

This morning during breakfast, a huge hawk soared into our yard and landed in the big tree in front of our house. From our cupola, we were able to get a very good view of it during a snow storm. I identified it as a juvenile Northern Goshawk. We had never seen one up close. It had all the identifying characteristics and looks exactly like the picture in Sibley’s - long strips on a white belly, speckled back, white eyebrow and uneven tail-bands. It accommodated us by showing a front view first and then turning for a great back view. Hope he found himself a quail for breakfast.

Story and photos by Gloria Lindstrom

The Hooter

The Hooter is the newsletter of the Kittitas Audubon Society, published monthly except for July. Submissions from readers are most welcome and encouraged. The editor reserves the right to edit for space, grammar, or suitability. Email text and/or photos to bobcat@kvalley.com, or snail mail to Jan Demorest, Hooter Editor, 1009 North B Street, Ellensburg, WA 98926. Submissions need to be in by the 15th of the preceding month.

GET YOUR E-HOOTER HERE!!!!

Save paper, printing, postage. If you would prefer to receive the electronic version, send us your name, mailing address, & email address to:

info@kittitasaudubon.org

At the beginning of each month we’ll send you an email with quick link to the new Hooter.
**RECYCLE USED BINOCULARS FOR KIDS**

- Do you happen to have an extra pair of pocket-sized, or beginner's binoculars laying around the house that you're not using anymore? If so, Edmonds Discovery Programs would love to get those out of your way! We have several educational programs for schools and day-camps during the spring, summer and fall that require the use of binoculars. With a limited budget we're not able to purchase enough to replace the worn out ones we've been using for the past several years, so we'd be most happy to receive some donated pairs. If you can help, please call Sally Lider, Edmonds Parks & Recreation, 425-771-0227, or email lider@ci.edmonds.wa.us.

**POSTAL ADDRESS TO MAIL ITEMS:**
c/o Sally Lider, Edmonds Discovery Programs
700 Main Street, Edmonds, WA, 98020

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**Grazing and Wildlife?**

How will proposed grazing in the Whiskey Dick-Quilomene Wildlife areas, eastern Kittitas County, affect birds like the Sage Grouse and Burrowing Owl that nest in sage habitat? The WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, which is proposing grazing on a 100 square mile area on lands that haven’t been grazed in a decade, has released a draft impact statement to address this and similar questions. The DFW seeks public response, by letter or FAX, by February 23. The report can be read on the internet at [http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm) or requested at the reference desk of the Ellensburg public library.

*Summarized from the Ellensburg Daily Record 1-28-09 by Steve Moore*

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**From the Boardroom: 1-8-09**

- Christi Norman, Audubon Washington, was present for a review of our state regional birding trails map, called "Sun & Sage" which will be available after the February 19th “roll-out” in Olympia. Board members & guests reviewed final proof for corrections or suggestions.
- Funds were approved for bird-focused activities at KEEN's celebration of the 10th anniversary of "Get Intimate with the Shrub Steppe” in the spring.
- KAS had its 20th anniversary in November 2008—(we celebrated at the January meeting with fabulous cakes made by Beth!).
- Discussion of the need for a "pro bono" attorney for KAS
- Letter of thanks for volunteers who helped at the "Nature of Night" event at CWU ~ Jeb & Gloria Baldi, Steve Moore & Jan Demorest, and Beth Rogers, Education Chair. Simple activities to teach kids about night-time nature: bird vision, birds of our region, night creatures, and bat-mask coloring
- Adjourned to Pizza Hut where Christi treated us to pizza and we didn’t talk about business (except for Beth & Christi who still had their noses in the map!)

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**Bird Sightings Needed!**

I have been making lists of birds seen at each of the thirty sites on our Birder's Guide. We need more species sightings from:

- John Wayne Trail at Hyak
- JWT at Bullfrog, Coal Mines Trail
- McDonald Road pond
- Teanaway River Bridge
- Swauk Discovery Trail
- Hayward Hill/Bettas Road
- Colockum
- Quilomene/Whiskey Dick

If you bird these locations please send me your sightings. I know we've birded them many times, but I don't have any records. Separate lists haven't been recorded for each site, just listed for the whole day. Marianne Gordon (marianne@elltel.net)
How do I tell them, the redwing blackbird males, that their favorite cattail marsh has disappeared in their winter absence? That a two-legged society of animals deemed it had little intrinsic worth.

What do I say to the pileated woodpecker Mom, who with a mouthful of grubs arrives at where her apartment high in the yellow pine snag used to be, only to find it shattered and hear the angry whine of something she does not comprehend and an empty hole in the sky.

How do I rationalize to the barn owl pair the razing of their abode, which is disintegrating day by day around their nest of fluffy young. This barn has stood for a century, outlived its usefulness, and become an eyesore to those that do not hunt at night. Silent and little noticed they had paid the rent faithfully in rodent depredation. Where will they go?

The meadowlark, whose melodious “Peter is a lazybird” pronouncement from a meadow fence post every spring, finds neither post nor meadow ~ finds instead, an upheaval of earth and stone and roaring monsters.

How do I explain to my grandchildren why there are no more curlews along Curlew Lane, nor elk at Elk Meadows, no rattlesnakes on Rattlesnake Ridge, or loons at Loon Lake? Do the displaced really feel honored to be remembered?

How do I tell them and all other wild creatures, resident and migrant alike? That year by year, two-legged animals are usurping their homesteads without just compensation, replaced by manicured, fertilized, and sprayed sterile ecosystems with exotic trees and shrubs, weeds and grasses. That these same two-legged animals, in their desire to become urbanized and reconnect with nature, have lost most of their understanding of nature.

Yes, there are feeble attempts at mitigation: backyard feeders, tiny parks with strange trees and shrubs. Refuges and natural areas scattered hither and yon, and thanklessly, larger areas of forest and shrub and plain. Yet the places of the most diversity that can support infinite wild populations disappear exponentially.

Where will it end?

©Joe Meuchel
The appendix then listed a number of seriously declining bird species, including:

**Cerulean Warbler.** Suffering an 82% decline because of habitat loss in the Mississippi Valley, and migration problems en route to the Andes.

**Painted Bunting.** 80% decline due to loss of habitat is southern US, barrier island development and, since it is one of our most colorful birds, collecting for the caged bird trade in its wintering area in Mexico and Cuba.

**Northern Bobwhite.** (70% decline) This popular quail is declining due to changes in agricultural and forestry practices. They have been introduced in Washington a number of times without success.

**Rusty Blackbird.** With a 99% decline it is one of the fastest declining species. Clear-cutting boreal forests in the north and loss of lowland habitat in the south is the two-pronged reason for decline. Acid rain may be a contributing factor.

**Endemic Birds of Hawaii.** 25 species extinct, 28 endangered. This was discussed in an earlier edition of The Hooter. Causes include introduction of avian malaria, rooting by feral pigs, displacement by exotics, and widespread habitat loss.

**Kittlitz’s Murrelet.** (90% decline) The retreat of tidewater glaciers is the primary reason for the decline along northern coasts. This bird is often seen on Alaska cruises in Glacier Bay.

**Red Knot.** (82% decline) This is one of the longest migrating birds so a lot can happen between Canada and southern Argentina. The main problem is over-harvesting of horseshoe crabs; their eggs are a mainstay of this bird’s diet during migration.

**Eastern (70% decline) and Western (30% decline) Meadowlarks.** The decline is a direct result of land use practices that leave little grassland habitat.

**SUCCESSES**

Not all the news is bad. Some bird populations have recovered and serve as good models of how it can be done right and most are a direct result of public/private partnerships.

**Bald Eagle** (1200% increase). Reduction of pesticide use in eagle habitat and relentless protection are the reasons for this remarkable recovery.

(Continued on page 6)
In late December, hundreds of California Brown Pelicans were reported dead or dying. Many were starving or disoriented. Some were found along highways, in backyards and even in the deserts of Arizona.

Many of the pelicans found appeared emaciated or near death. Officials began post-mortems on those that died to see if a deadly new disease or contamination might be at work. Now California Fish and Game officials say they are closing in on a more usual suspect – Mother Nature.

The tip-off for scientists was frostbite. It was severe for many pelicans – legs, toes and pouches were frozen off. It is now believed that thousands of birds were caught in the snowstorm and brutal cold snap on the Oregon-Washington border that hit the area in mid-December.

Brown Pelicans range from Northern California to Baja California in Mexico. However, in recent years, because of warmer weather and water and plentiful food supply, many pelicans have moved as far north as British Columbia.

Observers reported thousands of birds were seen roosting on East Sand Island in the Columbia River, in early December. It is believed that as many as 5,000 pelicans were on the island when the storm hit, bringing 60 mile-an-hour winds and temperatures below freezing.

Don Anderson, an avian ecologist at the University of California, Davis, said that once exposed to snow and extreme cold the birds have “a tough time drying off” if soaked. “They get wet and cold, and that’s the end of them”.

Many birds being treated at a sanctuary northeast of San Francisco were on the mend and eating a steady diet of fish. They are surviving.

Summarized from The New York Times, January 16, 2009 by Gloria Lindstrom

(Continued from page 5)

**Whooping Crane** (1200% recovery). The Migratory Bird Treaty Act and creation of refuges in the US and Canada get the credit.

**Kirtland’s Warbler** (650% increase). Targeted habitat preservation and cowbird nest parasitism control account for this huge increase. (Think Spotted Owl vs Barred Owl?)

**Wood Duck** (500% increase). Same as with Whooping Cranes.

**Wild Turkey** (20,000% increase). Wow! Now they are becoming pests. Forest management and transplanting really worked with turkeys.

So we know there is a serious problem with bird declines but we also know it can be reversed if all stakeholders get involved and we work together.

Jim Briggs
“Birding by the Map” Crab Creek 1-24-09

Delaying the 3rd Saturday field trip a week didn’t get us a sunny day, but the overcast sky was overhead and not underfoot. Nine intrepid birders logged 31 species. Location #30 on the Kittitas County Bird Map is not technically in Kittitas county but just across the Columbia river. It’s not technically a location either, more of a route, including a couple of stops along the Columbia River and a few more up the creek. First stop just across the river, at the junction of Hwys 243 & 26, in the pond to the east of 243, gave us a Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, a muskrat, and a beaver. Continuing south along the Columbia on 243 provided nice views of Gadwalls, Canvasbacks, Ruddy Ducks, Western Grebes, and Loons. Those are just the less common water fowl we spotted. Roadside stops going east along Crab Creek road gave us a Sora, Marsh Wren, and a number of American Robins. I really do wish that meant spring is on the way but they overwinter here. Maybe the Groundhog will have good news for us soon.

Cricket Webb

First Saturday BirdWalk 1-3-09

The weather was sunny, but the temperature was zero degrees for the First Saturday BirdWalk of the New Year on January 3rd. Even with the frigid air, ten people gathered to find the birds of winter. Even walking faster than usual (to keep toes from freezing!), fourteen species were spotted. Among them were a Bald Eagle that flew overhead, and a “text-book example” Rough-legged Hawk perched on the telephone pole. Upon reaching the second pond, we found only the far end had open water, but in the mist, appearing like a mirage, were six beautiful swans with a few ducks surrounding them. We assume the swans were Trumpeters. Do join us the first Saturday in February for the next walk. Who knows what the weather will be?!?!

Gloria Baldi

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Webmaster – Mark Whitesell  Email markwhitesell@hotmail.com

Check out our website ~ see The Hooter in color at Kittitasaudubon.org
Upcoming KAS Field Trips

Feb 7th  First Saturday BirdWalk @ Irene Rinehart Park. Meet at the bridge parking lot at 8:00 AM. Come join us and bring a friend to see what local wintering birds can be found after the flood washed through the park. Dress warmly (layers), and bring binoculars. A walking stick and/or Yak-trax can also be a help in icy weather. This walk is on uneven ground and usually takes about 2 to 3 hours. As with all Audubon events, the BirdWalk is open to the public.

Feb 21st  Birding by The Map @ Site #25 Fairview Area & Columbia River: We will be going out to the Fairview area (site #25) where all the cattle are. Calving always attracts eagles. Jeb Baldi has counted as many as 90 Bald Eagles in one day, cruising the roads. There will also be many hawks, and we might happen upon a few wintering smaller birds. Contact Cricket Webb (674-4035) birdnerd@inlandwireless.com, or Marianne Gordon (964-2320) marianne@elltel.net

March 7th  First Saturday BirdWalk – Irene Rinehart Park (see Feb. 7th)

March 21st  Birding by The Map @ Site #13 McDonald Rd Ponds: Please call either of the leaders to join. Contact Marianne Gordon (964-2320) or Cricket Webb (674-4035)

THANKS TO 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. Get your bird seed here!

Kittitas Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1443
Ellensburg WA 98926
http://www.kittitasaudubon.org

I HEARD A BIRD SING
I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December
A magical thing
And sweet to remember:
"We are nearer to Spring
Than we were in September,"
I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December.

by Oliver Herford (1863—1935)