



The Hooter

Kittitas Audubon Society

August 2009

AUGUST MEMBERSHIP PICNIC/POTLUCK

August 20th ~ 5:30 PM

Hal & Gloria Lindstrom's Home 1831 Hanson Rd.

Grilled hamburgers, buns, and the trimmings furnished by KAS

Members bring the rest – salads or desserts

BYOB, plates, utensils, & cloth napkins for each person in your party



Please RSVP by August 17th so we have an idea of the number of people attending

Call Jan 933-1179, Gloria L. 925-1807, or Jeb 933-1558

Bring folding chairs!



Live(ly) Old-Time Fiddle Music by Scatter Creek! (Jan & Steve & friends)

Music until it's time to feed the band!

September PROGRAM : "Raptors" Presented by Andy Stepniewski
THURSDAY, September 17th @ 7:00 PM ~ ELLENSBURG HIGH SCHOOL ~ ROOM 232

Look for details in the September Hooter

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.

Future Programs (mark your calendar!)

October 15th: David Knibb – "Grizzly Bears"

November 19th: TBA

* Owl print from "Yellow Monday Studios"

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*NON-VOTING VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

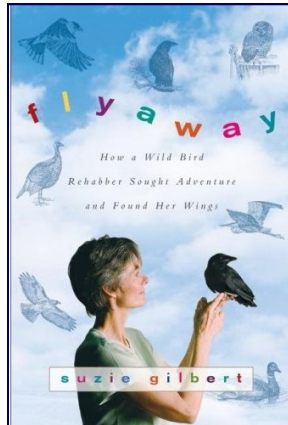
KAS Board Meetings are held at 4:30 PM on the 1st Thursday of each month on the third floor of the CWU Science Bldg, Room 301 (above the elephant desk). These meetings are open to the public and all Audubon members; please come and join in the discussions. Meetings adjourn by 6:00 or 6:30, after which we all go out for a sociable dinner ~ NO business discussion allowed!

Send in your stories & photos!

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, and/or suitability. Email text and/or photos to bobcat@kvalley.com or snail mail to Jan Demorest, Editor, 1009 North B Street, Ellensburg, WA 98926. Submissions need to be in by the 15th of the preceding month.

Flyaway: How a Wild Bird Rehabber Sought Adventure and Found Her Wings by Suzie Gilbert

"My goal was to show what wild birds are really like – from close, day-to-day observations that reveal both their inner and outer lives. The feedback I have received has been gratifying: readers tell me they are putting decals on their windows, planting bird-friendly trees, and avoiding clearing that patch of woods at the edge of their property, all because they suddenly feel they "know" the birds. There is a plea at the end of the book to support Audubon and Open Space organizations, so I hope my book may have some positive effect there, too."

Editor's note: I received this notice via email . The author is asking people to help promote her book. It sounds like a good read to me!) You can Google her name and/or the title.

**Washington Bird-Watching Research Survey
Please participate!**

Audubon Washington is just completing the final loop of the Great Washington State Birding Trail. Many individuals and organizations have been working diligently to complete this project. I am on the faculty at Central Washington University and was involved in the Sun and Sage Loop. We are seeking your assistance on a very important research project. I am working with Audubon Washington and others in order to investigate the economic impact of birdwatching-related activities on Washington state, as well as your attitudes and preferences regarding birdwatching and the environment. It involves 10 -15 minutes to complete an on-line survey. Access the survey by going to the following link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/Birdwatchers>

Your participation is voluntary, but very important so that your ideas and preferences are taken into consideration. Your responses will be collectively analyzed, anonymously, and kept strictly confidential. Thank you again. If you have any questions or have problems with accessing or completing the survey, please contact me: masbergb@cwu.edu or phone: 509-963-1969

Dr. Barbara Masberg ~ Central Washington University
Recreation and Tourism Program

GET YOUR HOOTER ONLINE

Save paper, printing, postage. If you would prefer to receive the electronic version, send 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.

May 30th Winegar Canyon ~ Six people parked near the mouth of Joe Watt Canyon on a calm sunny morning, where a blocked road leads quietly 1/4 mile south into Winegar Canyon, a short riparian furrow that crosses from bitterbrush-grassland up into ponderosa. It is the site of an old homestead, and a seasonal creek sinks into the meadow at the mouth, watering marshy grass, ancient fruit trees, and a lilac in full flower. Birds active in the bitterbrush and chokecherry greeted us immediately: **Bullock's Orioles**, **Lazuli Bunting**, **Brewer's Blackbirds**, and **Western Meadowlark**. Bluebird boxes placed in 2008 were examined in the grassy pastureland, and we found two occupied by **Western Bluebirds**, with clutches of eggs, and one by a **Tree Swallow**. (Up the canyon, House Wrens dominate these boxes.) Colorful sights in the riparian zone included **Western Tanager**, **Chipping Sparrow**, and **Spotted Towhee**. No warblers reported, but we heard and briefly saw **Warbling Vireos** nesting in the willow-cottonwood thicket. Total 19 species (a list of quality, not quantity.)
Steve Moore

June 14th Spotted Owls with Stan Sovern ~ Stan has been tracking and researching Spotted Owls in the Cle Elum Ranger District for 20 years. He knew precisely where to find an owl family for ten KAS members, who ranged in age from 10 to 90 years. For nearly an hour all observed a pair of adults with their two chicks in the family dynamics of sharing food. Live mice were provided by Stan, and the male would immediately capture it and pass it to the female. She determined which chick would receive the next mouse meal.

Mice are used to determine how many young are being fed in that nest. The downy white chicks, so soft in appearance and one definitely larger than the other, were a treat to watch at close range. Shortly after the field trip they were banded with unique colors, with the hope they will be found nesting in our forest in the future. From constant monitoring and noting the band color on the adults, Stan informed us the male was twelve years of age and the female, three. Spotted Owls in our area are declining 6-7 percent/year, an extremely rapid rate. **Thanks to Stan for the "experience of a life time"**.
Jeb Baldi

June 20th Birds by Map (site# 20) Robinson Canyon ~ Cricket A beautiful but windy day was enjoyed by three people. For a change of pace, we met at the Robinson Canyon parking lot, a fortuitous choice, but more about that later. First bird was a **Black-headed Grosbeak** in the parking lot before we headed out on the trail.

It takes a village to build the best scope. We assembled Jeb's scope (the best scope) with Kyle's much lighter tripod and I had the widget that connected them. That turned out to be an excellent choice.

The highlight of the trip was the flycatcher nest that required that scope. I would love to tell you exactly

what flycatcher but she (or he?) was hunkered down in that nest and was NOT going to give us enough of a view for an ID, so it had to go on the list as Empidonax.

Cedar Waxwing, Western Wood-Pewee and Spotted Towhee were all in typical locations with **swallows (Cliff & Northern Rough-winged)** dashing about overhead. Add two hummingbird species, a Calliope seen and a Rufous heard.

OH WAIT – the real highlight was the pair of **Rock Wrens**. Or maybe it was the **Western Tanager**. Ok, so we saw some very fine birds on the trail. I can't choose which I liked best.



Note that we only followed the main trail and the canyon is braided with trails. Since this a very protected area, you could hike this canyon on those not-so -rare windy days, taking a different trail every time.

As good as the birds were on the trail, the parking lot was the bonanza. I had to leave early but since we had met in the parking lot (remember I said I would get back to this) the guys who stayed behind reported **Yellow-breasted Chat**, orioles, and a **Red-naped Sapsucker**. The complete list is finished off with the usual suspects of **American Robin, Steller's Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-shafted Flicker**, crow, Turkey Vulture and the Killdeer seen on the way out of the canyon.
Cricket Webb

June 28th Birds of Kittitas Sage Country ~ Deborah Essman We started Sunday morning on a mission to find the local **Burrowing Owl** colony, and were not disappointed. We saw at least two adults and one immature, despite the "breazy" conditions. Continuing east on the Vantage Highway, we stopped at a favorite spot where Jan Demorest and Steve Moore monitor several of their many bluebird boxes. A nice protected area out of the wind, we were able to all get extremely good looks at **Brewer's Sparrows, Sage Thrashers**, and **Mountain Bluebirds**. Further along the highway we stopped where Jan and Steve have been watching an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** in one of their bluebird boxes. Long past the time the eggs should have hatched, we discovered that the female had abandoned the nest, leaving behind beautiful white and brown marbled eggs that were apparently sterile. Stopping at the Gingko State Park interpretive trail we watched a **Lark Sparrow** feeding its insistent fledgling. Also while there a **Rock Wren** sang and posed nicely and we strained to identify two **Sage Sparrows** chasing each other through the bitterbrush and sage. A **Western**

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Kingbird and Northern Oriole also gave us good looks. Down by the Columbia River we were serenaded by another **Lark Sparrow**—what a beautiful song. We also puzzled briefly over a **House Finch** with so much sticky mulberry fruit on its beak that it looked deformed! At the Ginkgo State Park Museum area we watched a pair of **Say's Phoebes** and heard, then saw, a **Western Wood-Pewee**. We also finished off the swallow list with **Cliff, Violet-green, and Barn**. Heading back to E-burg, my group stopped on the Number 81 Rd. next to the smaller pond, and were treated to a beautiful dark-morph **Swainson's hawk** soaring right overhead. The mate was on a nest in a cottonwood to the west. Ending at my house we were surprised by another Swainson's hawk following a swather cutting hay across the road. Apparently it knew that rodents and insects might be flushed from the tall timothy hay. As the Swainson's hovered in the wind, a male **Northern Harrier** flew up and did its best to drive it off. Not to be deterred, the Swainson's pounced on a vole or juicy grasshopper and landed on a fence-post to feast. Jeb's group scored a **Prairie Falcon, Canada Goose, Turkey Vulture, and Black-billed Magpie** on their way home. It was a glorious day, with 41 species! Thank you to everyone that participated. *Deb Essman*



Lark Sparrow

Photo by Steve Moore

July 4th First Saturday BirdWalk What a beautiful morning! Three KAS members, plus four visitors from out of the county (one from California) gathered to see our local birds. There was much activity in the bird world with young to feed. We discovered two **Western Wood-Pewee** nests, both about thirty feet above the ground, at the bend of a major horizontal branch in cottonwood trees. **Downy Woodpeckers** with fledglings were numerous, as well as the chickadees, and we spotted several **Yellow Warblers**. However, as the sun rose higher, it became quite warm, so we ended the enjoyable morning with a tally of 21 species. *Gloria & Jeb Baldi*

July 11th Grass Camp Loop Trail - Wild plants and Birds ~ Forsythes

On Saturday July 11, 2009, a joint venture with Kittitas Audubon and the Washington Native Plant Society took place. 9 people, including 4 from the West Side, convened at Naneum Meadows and enjoyed the wetland plants at length, before finally going up around the Grass Camp Loop trail (6 miles). All were in good humor, despite the mosquitoes, and saw many interesting plants, referencing the plant list from WNPS. Don Knoke added several to his list during the day. Views were wonderful to the Mission Ridge area. A **Western Tanager** close by was a bright spot in the day, as were the dried mangos, fruit bars and soy bars shared by Steve Moore, Kay Forsythe, and Barbara Downward! A showy bitterroot that we'd only seen before in Chelan Co, *Lewisia tweedii*, was the big surprise for Kay and Tuck. Lovely, warm, beautiful day. *Tuck Forsythe*



Western Wood Pewee

Photo by Steve Moore

July 18th Birds by Map (site #7) Cle Elum River Corridor ~ Cricket The third Saturday field trip schedule said site 7, Cle Elum River Corridor meaning from the dam down. When I was putting out the reminder I was thinking Upper Cle Elum River valley, site 12. So-o-o we did a little of both. It was **hot**. There were only three of us but we had a good time and did see lots of birds, especially earlier in the day.



Willow Flycatcher

Photo by Cricket Webb

We started out going to the pond where Bullfrog Road crosses the Cle Elum River. I had never been there and was pleasantly surprised at the setting and the wildlife. First there was the requisite **Great Blue Heron** and a **Red-tailed Hawk**. Nothing out of the ordinary there. Then closer to us: what was that flitting behind the leaves? And another one. And another one. **Gray Catbirds!** They came out several times for us to get very good looks.

The **Western Wood-Pewees** were everywhere calling and catching. The real lesson for the day involved figuring out what those other two flycatchers were. After a long discussion and referring to our guides we decided on Dusky and **Willow Flycatchers**. Later in the day we added the **Olive-sided Flycatcher**. We also got a great visual of a **Common Yellowthroat** which I hadn't seen for many years. What a nice bird.

After driving the length of Lake Cle Elum, we took a narrow side road south from

(Continued on page 5)

Scientists to Investigate Wind Power Impacts on Migratory Wildlife



Industry and conservation representatives set research priorities

Racine, WI & Ithaca, NY, July 23, 2009 -
Thirty top wildlife scientists have announced agreement on some of the highest research priorities to help Amer-

ica's rapidly growing wind energy industry produce much-needed alternative energy—while also providing safe passage for birds and bats. This coalition of scientists from industry, government, nongovernmental organizations, and universities met recently in Racine, Wisconsin, to address unanswered questions about how continued wind energy development will affect migrating birds and bats. The meeting was hosted by the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#), the [American Bird](#)

[Conservancy](#), and [The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread](#).

Top research priorities identified by the coalition include:

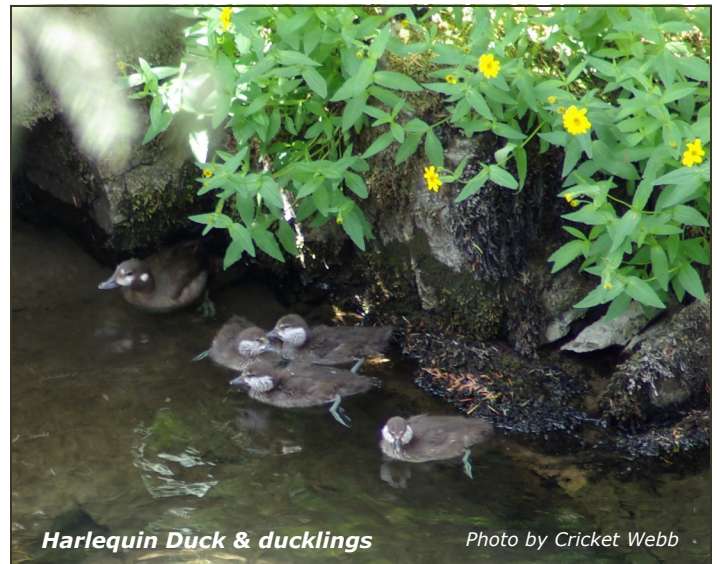
- Studying bird and bat behaviors and more accurately estimating mortality at existing wind turbines
- Using current and newly-obtained information on bird and bat population numbers and distributions to focus research on critically important migratory routes and timing
- Documenting how interactions of birds and bats with turbines are affected by factors such as weather, topography, and their distribution within airspace swept by wind turbine blades
- Establish standardized methods for pre- and post-construction studies of bird and bat behavior at wind facilities
- Conduct research on the best methods for mitigating the impacts of wind energy development on birds and bats

For more information, contact the Editor.

(Field trips - Continued from page 4)

French Cabin Creek to a pond Jo Ellen and I had been to in the past. Unfortunately it was a beaver pond and since the beavers are no longer in residence, there was little water and it was far away. As we walked in, however, we spooked a little **grouse** family. The background sound as we glassed the field was the clucking of mama calling her chicks to her. A mama **Harlequin Duck** and ducklings were in a creek under one of the bridges on the way back to the main road. From there we drove to Cooper Lake, over Cooper Pass, and a short way up the rocky road north of Salmon la Sac, enjoying different butterflies feeding on yarrow by the side of the road. By adding in all the usual thrushes, swallows, chickadees, etc., we sighted 39 species, divided about equally between the two sites.

Marianne Gordon



Harlequin Duck & ducklings

Photo by Cricket Webb

A BIG THANK YOU!

This past year we have had some great trips, thanks to people like **Charles Hawkins** (Sage Grouse), **Jud and Muriel Weaver** (Pot Holes Reservoir via canoe), **Steve Moore** (Winegar Canyon), **Marilyn & Gerry Sorenson** (Tall timbers/Lake Wenatchee), **Stan Sovern** (Spotted Owls), **Deborah Essman** (Sage Birds), **Kay & Tuck Forsythe** (Grass Camp Loop), and **Cricket & Marianne** with the 3rd Saturday Birding by Map locations.

They are all members willing to share their time and talent to find the wonderful birds of Kittitas County.

Please consider helping this coming fall and winter with places you would like to share with chapter members. The more we are in the field the more birds we see. Have you seen all the birds on the county checklist? I will be happy to help arrange your trip. Please call 933-1558 with your suggestions and thoughts. **Jeb**

Here's a selection of recent listings from our very own regional "BirdKitt", an online "listserve" for all birders interested in bird sightings in Kittitas County.

If you are not already signed up, here's how to do it: send an email to subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Reply to the first email about Birdkitt that you receive from "yahoogroups". To unsubscribe: send email to birdkitt

- unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com. If you have difficulty, email Beth Rogers kittittasadudbon@inland.net or Chris Caviezel chris.caviezel@gmail.com

Thanks to Beth Rogers and Cricket Webb for getting this up and running! This is a great resource for finding places to look for birds in the valley.

7/16/09 — Dog days of summer?

Okay, maybe not quite but we are thoroughly enjoying the antics of all the new birds that have entered the world in the last month or so. The young White-crowned Sparrows are slowly shedding their baby plumage in favor of the more adult-like plumage that we are familiar with. The young Steller's Jay drops by regularly for a drink. Its crest is still a little scruffy and its tail a bit short but otherwise it looks much like its parents. The little quail are just venturing out into our freshly mowed fire break since there is no longer the tall grass to hide in. Others that are around are the Chipping Sparrow and Spotted Towhee. At least one box of Tree Sparrows has fledged and the Western Bluebirds are out following the male around and the female has five beautiful blue eggs that she is tending. The House Wrens are no longer chattering under my bedroom window in the morning and the young have moved out into the bitterbrush scrub in our gully. The second pair is still occupying Craig's pellet gun target, however. (*editor: we assume this doesn't mean he's shooting them!*)

We caught a show of the young Red-tailed Hawk getting a flying lesson a couple evenings ago. It was actually doing a pretty good job but not real comfortable since he kept screeching the whole time we were watching.

The most exciting one is new this year. The Say's Phoebes stayed around to nest. They built a nest under the as yet unfinished eaves of the neighbor's house and fledged about 10 days ago. They showed up in our tractor shed yesterday and were hanging around with the chickens earlier this morning. I hope they are good enough to catch grasshoppers since the chickens don't make much effort. Also nesting under the neighbor's eaves is a pair of Violet-green Swallows. They are still feeding young on the nest.

Another new one for this year is Lazuli Buntings staying around. We assume they are nesting since they have been around since late May. The females are quite hidden.

The American Goldfinches are still here. Being late nesters they haven't brought families around yet but there is plenty of downy plant material floating around for nest building.

I think we enjoy this variety of backyard bird watching as much or more than being out looking for new birds.

Beth Rogers (Ellensburg)

7/4/09 I've been hearing a bird song I couldn't figure out. So I took a chair and sat out on the other of the apple trees. I finally got a visual in the top of the cherry trees. A Lazuli Bunting.

It's the "feeding babies" time of year. There shouldn't be a bug on the place. Starlings working in the tall grass, House Wrens buzzing in the brush pile, Bullock's Orioles disappearing into trees in three different locations, American Robins on the lawn, House Finches bringing fledglings to the feeders, Steller's Jays trying to catch grasshoppers in the driveway, Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds fly-catching from the shrubs, Red-naped Sapsuckers zip-ping between willows and aspens, Western Wood-pewees hunting from bare aspen branches, California Quail clucking in the field.

I have been able to see baby orioles sitting outside the nest waiting for mom and dad to come feed them. The nest hangs right above the butterfly garden visible from my desk. The other two nests are in another aspen and in one of the spruce trees. In two weeks they will all be gone.

The chickadees are around but don't need to come to the feeders. The Black-headed Grosbeaks must have fledged. They are around but not nearly as busy as the other birds.

The best time of day to see all this is in the morning when all those kids are clamoring for breakfast.

Marianne Gordon (Ellensburg)



Mountain Bluebird nestling photo by JLD

"To be without birds would be to suffer a kind of blindness, a glaucoma gauzing over one of the planet's special brightnesses."

~ Ivan Doig

Thanks to Dick Ambrose for sending this.

Kittitas Audubon President, Tom Gauron, brought an odd-looking wildlife house to a board meeting. Members tried guessing what it was and one (me) even thought it was a drumming board for sapsuckers because of its many holes.

Tom explained that it was a nesting block for Blue Orchard Mason Bees and with all the reports of declining populations of honeybees, these may gain in importance as pollinators. In a fruit-growing region, this could be significant.

The Orchard Mason Bee (*Osmia lignaria*) is a little smaller than a honeybee and is a shiny dark blue color. They are not aggressive and will sting only if provoked. They get in trouble when they nest in holes in wood. Homeowners often see these bees crawling into holes in their houses and mistakenly think the bees bored them. They are like many cavity-nesting birds using only pre-made holes.



Photo by Diane Gauron

Tom feels these nesting blocks, if the trend caught on, could go a long way toward building up a backup population of pollinators in our valley. Admittedly, a hive of honeybees contains thousands of pollinators and our efforts would result in hundreds at best, but every little pollinator helps.

When she is ready to nest, the female Mason bee chooses a hole in a tree or wooden structure that is between 1/4 and 3/8 inches in diameter, a little larger than her body. She forms a ball in the back of a tube made from 15 to 20 loads of pollen and nectar, to serve as food for a developing larva. After laying a single egg, she adds a daub of mud to seal in this layer. She repeats this process 5 to 10 times until the hole is filled with cells.

In a few days the eggs hatch, the larvae eat their pollen/nectar caches, and pupate, spending the winter in the burrow. They begin to emerge the following spring; this is the "isn't nature incredible" part. The first to hatch are the males and they are always in the outside cells. After they depart, the females emerge from the inner cells, and the cycle begins again.

(Continued on page 8)

BECOME AN AUDUBON MEMBER!!

Receive The Hooter ~ help support education and conservation activities and projects!

____ Become a member of Kittitas Audubon \$20 (includes monthly newsletter)

____ Join as a National Audubon member \$20 (renewals \$35)

(includes local membership & monthly newsletter)

____ Make a donation. Amount enclosed \$_____

Mail to: Kittitas Audubon, PO Box 1443, Ellensburg, WA 98926

Checks payable to Kittitas Audubon



Darling Bird Studios, ©2007 UNA

Kittitas Audubon is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational society. All memberships and donations are tax-deductible.

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Would you like to receive The Hooter electronically?

Yes ____ No, prefer paper edition ____

Membership forms are also available on our Web site: Kittitasaudubon.org.

Webmaster – Mark Whitesell

Email markwhitesell@hotmail.com

Check out our website ~ see The Hooter in color at Kittitasaudubon.org

Upcoming KAS Field Trips

August 1st First Saturday BirdWalk at Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park. Meet at 8:00 AM at the bridge parking lot off Umtaneum Road. Bring binoculars and a friend--or two. Migration is beginning so we may see a few new species.

August 15th Reecer Creek & Table Mountain ~ Call Cricket @ 509-674-4035) or Marianne @ 964-2320 for details

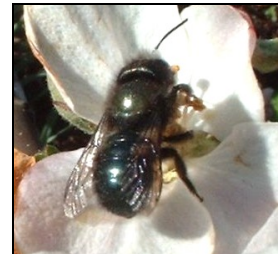
September 5th First Saturday BirdWalk at Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park. Meet at 8:00 AM at the bridge parking lot off Umtaneum Road. Bring binoculars and a friend--or two.

(Bee Houses - Continued from page 7)

Tom uses sections of 4 X 4s and drills his 5/16-inch holes about three inches deep. When finished the post looks like a cribbage board. He drills the holes at a slight down angle and puts a roof over it to keep out water. He then mounts it, facing east just like a bird-house. It helps if there is a source of mud nearby for building the cells.

Tom thinks this might be a good fundraiser for KAS as well as fulfilling our mission of good works for nature. You can create your own bee block (plans from Tom) or purchase one for \$10 from KAS.

Thanks to Jim Briggs for contributing this article.



Blue Orchard Mason Bee

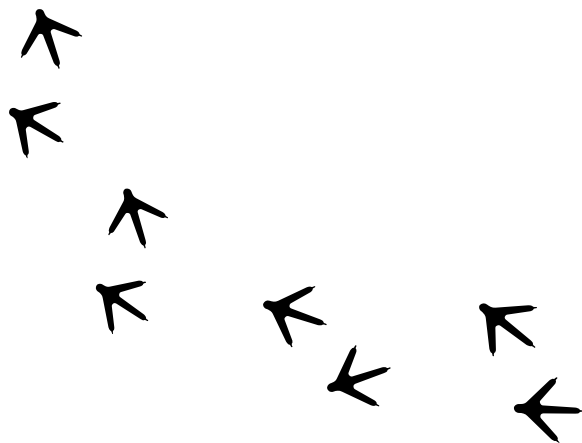
Editor's note: Orchard Mason Bees are only one species of many native bees in North America. They are more efficient pollinators than honey bees, which are native to Africa and Asia, and were first introduced to North America in the early 17th century. Honey bees are colonial, living in hives; native bees are solitary, using nest blocks/holes only for laying, hatching, and development of pupae into mature bees.

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>



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.