



The Hooter

Kittitas Audubon

June/July 2010

Black-capped Chickadee in Action ~ Backyard Nest-building



A few weeks ago while working in our back yard for several days, I would hear a tap, tap, tap. It sounded something like a woodpecker but was a much softer noise and it had to be close by. Finally I interrupted my work long enough to discover a Black-capped Chickadee near by and on closer inspection I discovered a hole in an old apple tree.

I observed the tree for a while and watched the chickadee going into the hole, then flying into a high branch, dropping wood chips, and flying back into the hole. After several days, the tap, tap, tapping ended and the chickadee was now carrying nest material into the hole.

The photo with the penny shows the size of a few of the larger chips found on the concrete steps beneath one of the branches the chickadee would land on to deposit the chips.

~ Gloria Lindstrom

(Ed. We'll look for further progress reports as the nesting season continues...!)



Photos by Gloria Lindstrom

Looking Ahead ~ Programs for 2010–2011

September ~ CWU grad student Adam Hannuksela, "Bird Communities of Sonora, Mexico"

October ~ Alan Bauer, author & photographer, most recently published a book on desert hiking; good bird photos and other wonders.

November ~ Richy Harrod and Bill Gaines, researchers from the USFS "Forest Restoration Strategy in the eastern Cascades."

January 2011 ~ Jeb and Gloria have volunteered for this one

February ~ possibly Steve Moore & Jan Demorest coordinating a members' slide show

March ~ David Jennings, undersea photography in Puget Sound, reportedly has an outstanding program.

April & May ~ not filled (*Feel free to call Hal Lindstrom, 925-1807, with any ideas you may have!*)

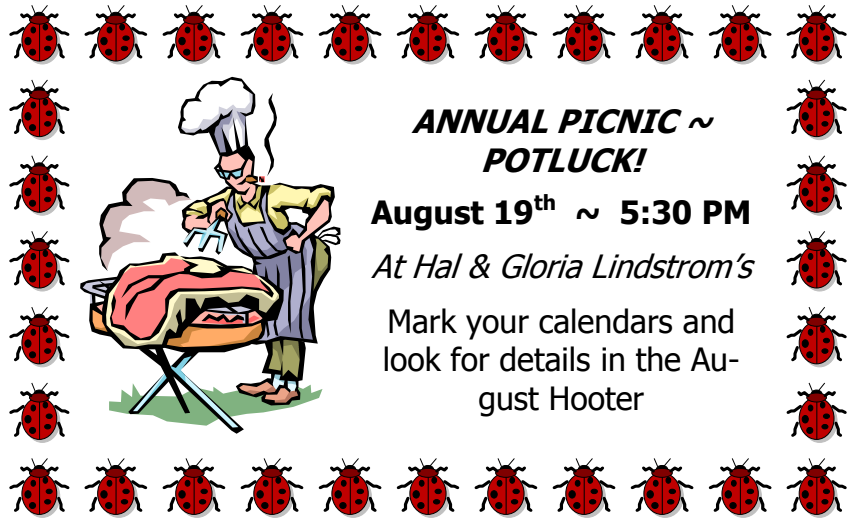
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**NON-VOTING VOLUNTEER POSITIONS*

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!



ANNUAL PICNIC ~ POTLUCK!

August 19th ~ 5:30 PM

At Hal & Gloria Lindstrom's

Mark your calendars and look for details in the August Hooter

Roslyn Urban Forest Bird-watching Tour ~ June 5th, 8 Am–10 AM

Please join a basic bird-watching tour of the Roslyn Urban Forest, led by a member of the Kittitas County Audubon. ~ No experience necessary. If you have binoculars or field guides bring them. ~ Dress for the weather.

Please, no dogs.

With enough interest, there may be future bird identification sessions and additional bird walks.

Saturday, June 5th, 8 AM - 10 AM

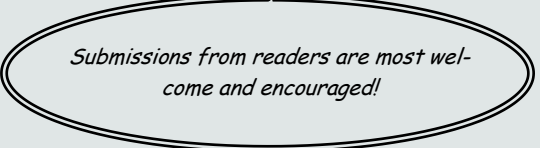
Meet at the Roslyn Library.

Pre-registration necessary.

Please call the Roslyn City Offices (509) 649-3105 and talk to Amber Shallow.

Send in your stories & photos!

The Hooter is the newsletter of Kittitas Audubon, published monthly except for July.



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, Hooter Editor, 1009 North B Street, Ellensburg, WA 98926. Submissions need to be in by the 15th of the preceding month.

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

Many thanks to the Ellensburg Public Library for sponsoring our meetings at the Hal Holmes Center.



First Saturday Birdwalk: May 1st ~ Nine people gathered on a cool May 1st to celebrate May Day searching for avian species and enjoying a Saturday morning walk. (Low 40's becoming cooler as clouds moved in and the wind picked up). Thirty-two species were seen, including a new sub-species for the group, the **Myrtle** variety of the Yellow-rumped Warbler. The normal sub-species seen is the **Audubon** indicated by the yellow throat, whereas the Myrtle has a white throat. Other less common species observed which arrive mainly in our springtime were the **Hammond's Flycatcher, Townsend's Solitaire, Nashville Warbler, and two House Wrens, along with a Double-crested Cormorant and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.** As we searched, the weather became more overcast bringing a breeze and telling us to hurry along. Fun morning with other bird lovers! Join us the first Saturday in June.

Saturday April 24th ~ Columbia Basin & Crab Creek ~ "BLITZ THE BASIN" ~ On April 24 five of us headed east to bird the Columbia Basin wetlands. Two weeks later I had out-of-town guests, so three of us went again to see what we could find. We were surprised at the difference two weeks can make.

Highlight of both trips were fifteen species of ducks. Brightest among them were **Cinnamon Teal** which were everywhere. A little pond near the Silica Road exit had several pairs of **Ruddy Ducks**, with their intense blue bills.

We saw Pied-billed Grebe in several locations. On the earlier trip what we saw from Ginkgo Visitor's Center below on the river we ultimately decided were **Horned Grebes.** Two weeks later we proved it because from the Frenchman Coulee side they were on the river right in front of us.

We need to try to drop down that coulee when we make our usual spring trip. There was a Rock Wren putting on quite a show and the **White-throated Swifts** were at eye level.

Killdeer, **American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt** and **Long-billed Curlew** were seen on both trips ~ on first trip we saw a **Western Sandpiper**; on the second a **Least Sandpiper.** Luck of the draw, I guess. We also saw a **Wilson's Phalarope** on the second trip. Maybe we were too early the first time. We saw **Caspian Terns** both trips but we haven't seen Forster's for several years. That's something to think about.

Of course, we saw all the usual blackbirds, finches

and farmland birds you can see anywhere at this time of year.

On the later trip we had enough time to drive back the Old Vantage Highway. We spent some time watching the wind tower people lift the entire blade structure to the top of one of the towers. While waiting the energetic pair took a stroll through the sage and gleaned **Sage Thrashers** and **Horned Larks.**

Lastly, or should I say firstly, on the second trip we made a beeline for Othello to look for **Burrowing Owls.** Before getting that far we had to stop at the wetlands on Highway 26 which usually is our turnaround point. While admiring all the avocets, Black-necked Stilts and phalaropes we saw something very unusual: a **Prairie Falcon** was sitting at the edge of the water taking a bath!

Before the second trip, I had asked Randy Hill (of the NWR staff) if he knew where we might look for **Burrowing Owls.** He gave us directions to three locations. Surprise! There were owls at two of them. While we were watching the second one a **Northern Harrier** flew over. The owl made a couple of quick steps closer to his hole then couldn't decide whether he should watch us or watch the harrier. At that point we left him in peace.

Marianne Gordon

PS: Two birds new to my Basin list: a **Long-billed Dowitcher** and a field full of **American Pipits.**

Saturday May 15th ~ 3rd Saturday Birding by the Map ~ Easton State Park ~ The three of us started birding this field trip before we got out of the parking lot where we met. Not all that unusual, but I rarely report it, since it is not "officially" part of the field trip. This sighting was too good to pass up. In the trees above the cars were **Red Crossbills.** It took a few tries to get everyone to see them because the birds were a bit too busy bouncing from branch to branch.

"Finding the bird that we knew was up there somewhere" was the theme of the day. The tall thick forest at Easton State Park does not make seeing the birds easy. We heard **Red-breasted Nuthatches** all day but only saw one. I am trying to learn to bird by ear but it is a struggle for me. I was able to ID the **Rufous Hummingbird** as it buzzed by, from the sound. Seeing that one was perfect since he was turned into the sun and shining like a tiny little beacon.

(Continued on page 4)

KITTITAS AUDUBON AT WORK!!

Spreading the word about birds!

During the past few weeks several projects by KAS members have been performed to promote an appreciation of birds.

Project #1. Nearly 500 copies of a new bird book, *Birds of the Inland Northwest and Northern Rockies*, have been donated to all Kittitas County elementary schools, as well as Cle Elum Middle School and Ellensburg High School. A printing error involving two pages of the book resulted in allowing KAS to write a proposal to the publisher for dispersal to schools; the proposal was accepted. Each book required an insert about the error, as well as, double-marking with the

KAS stamp. A short presentation to school rooms was given with the book give-away. Many thanks go the Jeb Baldi, Gloria Baldi, Gloria Lindstrom and Marilyn Sorenson for doing the school presentations, and to Tom Gauron, Diane Bullock, and Gerry Sorenson for helping add the inserts.

Project #2. Through the efforts of Beth Rogers, several copies of a children's book, *The Blues Go Birding Across America*, have been donated to three libraries and several elementary school teachers. The beautiful illustrations of various birds accompany the story of a traveling band of bluebirds.

Project #3. KAS members collected and donated a number of bird-related items to fill a "Birdy Basket" for the silent

auction fundraiser for Ellensburg Education Foundation to buy updated computers for Morgan Middle School. The basket brought \$125.00 toward their goal.

Project #4. Four members, Jason Scribner, Gerry Sorenson, Tom Gauron, and Jeb Baldi, have spent time and muscle gathering perch poles, arranging requests from land owners, digging holes, and inserting perch poles for raptors. To date, eight perches have been raised!! And evidence in the form of photos has shown that at least Red-tailed Hawks and Great Horned Owls are using them!!

MANY THANKS TO ALL THE ABOVE FOR THEIR TIME AND HELP ON THESE PROJECTS REGARDING BIRDS!!

(Field trips ~ Continued from page 3)

The Ring-necked Duck and female Bufflehead *wwwaaaaayy* out on the lake were tougher. The swallows were easy to see but as always, getting a long enough look to tell them apart, not so easy. Some were more obvious, like the Steller's Jay, crow and Turkey Vulture. Normally pretty cooperative, even the Chestnut-backed Chickadees were being coy, but we were up to the challenge and everyone got a good look at them.

And then there were the Warblers. . . **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were everywhere and so was another one that we couldn't figure out. As we got to the southwest corner of the lake, the trees thinned out a bit and we heard that same bird again. This time we caught sight of it flying to a branch with a clear view ~ a **Townsend's Warbler!**

In spite of the challenges (and maybe because of it) we had a great day ~ sunny with beautiful wildflowers and good company, all that and birds, too. What is not to love about it?

~ Cricket Webb

Tom & Diane's Owl Family

Nesting in an old Russian Olive in the middle of their driveway ~ first photo taken 4/27/10 ~



tiny fuzzy chicks with Mom. Looks like the wind might have been blowing!

Next photo taken 11 days later!



My, how those babies do grow!

Photos by Diane Gauron

Burrowing Owls near Othello ~ 5/25/10

Following Marianne Gordon's lead, I made two trips over to Othello in the past week to see if I could see the Burrowing Owls. To my surprise and great excitement, they were out and about at the first site on my list! This burrow is in a ditch bank just at the side of a rather busy farm road which defeated my efforts to get photos of the chicks on the first visit; hence, my second expedition yesterday. Here's the best of the lot



Seven Burrowing Owl chicks all in a row!

(six nestlings ~ me wishing for a better camera!)
~ Jan Demorest

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Governor Chris Gregoire has requested that a Kittitas Audubon member serve on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the new NEXCO Windfarm being constructed on the Vantage Highway towards Ryegrass.

This involves two meetings a year and reviewing reports for the windfarm especially the post-construction avian and bat monitoring study results.

Good computer skills are necessary as communication takes place over the Internet.

We hope that someone will see this as an opportunity to serve Audubon and the State.

Please contact: Gloria Lindstrom at 509-925-1807 if you feel you could help on this.

Joe Meuchel is KAS rep on the TAC for Wild Horse Wind Power Project; Janet Nelson is the alternate. You can talk to them to find out more about how a TAC operates. Joe (509) 933-3011, Janet (509) 674-6165.

Please Please Please !!! BIRD SIGHTINGS NEEDED!

Participants in KAS field trips already know that I am collecting data on sightings at each of the sites on our "Birding in Kittitas County" map.

I have at least one from most of the sites though it will be better when I have seasonal reports from each one. Irene Rinehart is the ultimate. Once a month for seven years now!

However, there are still five sites with no reports:

- Site #9 Stream C Corridor
- Site #14 John Wayne Trail from Lower Peoh Point Road
- Site #16A Red Top Lookout
- Site #17 Swauk Discovery Trail
- Site #18 Reecer Creek, Table Mountain.

The first two can be done in a few hours. The others entail a lot of driving. Take a picnic lunch and make a day of it! Grab your binocs and hit the road.

~ Marianne Gordon Email reports to: marianne@elltel.net



The Hooter is going on its annual summer vacation!

Be back in August...

Have a great summer.

Join one of the many fine field trips in June.

See you at the picnic in August!

Here's a selection of recent listings from our very own regional "**BirdKitt**", an online "list-serve" 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. Questions? 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!

5/8/2010 ~ Our yard is a seething mass of feathered migrants. Most fun today were 6 pairs of Western Tanagers helping themselves to the bugs in the willows (no fruit yet). We have lots of warblers too: Yellow-rumped, Nashville, MacGillivray's, and Townsend's ~ a new yard bird for us--not uncommon I know but somehow has stayed under the radar. Our 7-year-old grandson picked out a "brown-headed cowboy" bird gurgling in the aspen this afternoon. A Black-chinned Hummingbird came up to the kitchen window this morning and tried to stare-down Mr. Bill. Only one Eurasian Collared Dove in the yard, but can hear them across the road so assume they're nesting. White-crowned Sparrow numbers are decreasing. ~ A young Great-horned Owl was sitting in the cottonwoods across the road this afternoon. Snipes are "winnowing" all over and the Swainson's Hawk female is on the nest on the Vantage Hwy. In town (Ellensburg) Mother has Evening Grosbeaks eating her out of house and home, and a few Eurasian Collared Doves under the feeders.

~ Deborah on the Brick Mill Road north of Kittitas

5/8/2010 ~ Tonight I counted (estimated!) 850 Vaux's Swifts entering the chimney of the old Ellensburg Hospital on East 3rd Ave, swarming and swirling, zooming around above the trees and coming back to swirl some more. This went on from 7:15 when I arrived until 8:34 when the last bird went to bed and I headed for home ~ If you want to witness this spectacle of nature, arrive at least 1/2 hour before sunset and stay until they go in! You will probably find me there every night for the next few nights. They are on their northern migration to breeding areas at

higher elevations and latitudes.
~Jan Demorest, Ellensburg

5/9/2010 ~ We jeeped down to Quilomene Bay on the Columbia River today. What a difference a month makes. No more snow on the top of Beacon Ridge Road, and even more wildflowers than last week. On our way we saw 2 Western Kingbirds just down the road from our house on the Brick Mill, first I've seen this year. Two and a half hours and 25 miles from the house we reached Quilomene Bay. The trees were full of little birds--Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Townsend's, Yellow-rumped, Nashville, and MacGillivray's Warblers, Warbling Vireos, Chipping Sparrows, and I heard a Yellow-breasted Chat. Lots of White-crowned Sparrows under the sagebrush, and Sage Sparrows and Horned Larks singing. Bird of the day, though, was a Lewis's Woodpecker that landed in the top of one of the old mulberry trees. (The bay is the site of the old Osborne homestead that still has the root cellar, apricot & walnut trees, even a lilac bush in full bloom--all over a hundred years old). White-throated Swifts and Violet-green Swallows flew overhead. We were down to our T-shirts--first tan of the year!

It was glorious. ~ Deborah on the Brick Mill Road north of Kittitas

5/10/2010 ~ I have been remiss about posting what has been happening in my yard this year. Today was too cool to not share. I have been seeing a female Red Crossbill at my feeder for a few weeks. Today she brought the family. Here's a picture of her and her babies. ~ Cricket in Cle Elum

5/23/2010 ~ The yard is still harboring several pairs of Western Tanagers--what eye candy! Heard a Western Wood Peewee in the willows today; Common Snipes, killdeer, and Long-billed Curlews call overhead ~ Saturday we jeeped up Colockum Rd over to Crossover Rd and Mr. Bill dropped me off on Brushy Ridge for a leisurely downhill hike to the "red barn" in the Little Brushy where he picked me up. Beautiful views of the Columbia River, especially looking towards Moses Coulee on the east side. It was only a short 5-mile hike starting in Ponderosa Pine forest (had several gravid cow elk eyeing me warily from the treeline) then down into the shrub steppe. The wildflowers were spectacular--especially the flowering bitterroot (*Lewisia rediviva*) on rocky outcrops. The hedgehog cactus are much bigger than I've ever seen and starting to bloom too. ~ Avian highlights: lots of singing Lark Sparrows and Lazuli Buntings, Vesper & Chipping Sparrows, Horned Larks, Bullock's Orioles, Western Tanagers, Western and Mountain Bluebirds. Rattlesnakes not as prevalent as they were last weekend, but we're still picking ticks off the dogs. Oh well--it was worth it.

~ Deborah on Brick Mill



The mission of Kittitas Audubon is to develop an appreciation of nature through education and conservation, with a focus on birds. The goal for KAS is to foster a vibrant active organization recognized in Kittitas County.



The Hooter is now printed on "Grays Harbor 100" paper ~ 100% post-consumer waste, manufactured in Washington State, using 100% renewable, zero-carbon-footprint energy.

Check out the Grays Harbor Paper website at:

http://www.ghplp.com/index.html

Your KAS membership dues working for a better environment!

Let us know what you think!



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!

BECOME AN AUDUBON MEMBER!! (Or renew your membership!)

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

___ Become a member of Kittitas Audubon \$20 (you will receive the monthly newsletter)

___ Renew your KAS membership \$20

___ Join as a National Audubon (NAS) member \$20

(includes local membership & monthly newsletter)

(Renew NAS by sending remittance to NAS, using the renewal form they will send directly to you)

___ Make a donation. Amount enclosed \$_____



Darling Bird Studios, ©2007 UNA

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

Kittitas Audubon is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization.

All memberships and donations are tax-deductible.

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

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Yes ___ No, prefer paper edition ___

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Email markwhitesell@hotmail.com

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

Upcoming KAS Field Trips

FIELD TRIPS: Call Jeb Baldi at [933-1558](tel:933-1558) with any questions on the following trips.

JUNE ~

Saturday 5th ~ First Saturday BirdWalk ~ Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park. Meet at the bridge parking lot at 8:00 AM for about a three hour walk. Bring binoculars and a friend. Gloria & Jeb Baldi

Saturday 12th ~ Naneum Canyon, a protected area in the hills north of Ellensburg harbors good birds. Half-day trip led by Kay & Tuck Forsythe. Meet at the Starbucks parking lot east of CWU at 7:00AM.

Wednesday 16th ~ Taneum Canyon to South Fork Meadows will provide forest birds and native flowers. Mid-week trip lead by Don Knoke. Call Jeb for details!

Saturday 19th ~ 3rd Saturday Birding by the Map Site # 26 ~ NE Kittitas County and Colockum Pass area (high country/sage birds). Call Cricket Webb (674-4035) or Marianne Gordon (964-2320) for details.

Saturday 26th ~ Valley Birds: Burrowing Owls and other uncommon birds. This is a full-day trip beginning at 7:30 AM. Lead by Deborah Essman. Limited number of people so you must call Jeb (933-1558) to sign up.

JULY ~

Saturday 3rd ~ First Saturday BirdWalk ~ Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park. 8:00AM at bridge parking lot. (See above) Gloria & Jeb

Saturday 17th ~ 3rd Saturday Birding by the Map Site #11 ~ upper Cle Elum River/Salmon La Sac (high country forest birds). Call Cricket Webb (674-4035) or Marianne Gordon (964-2320) for details.

Saturday 24th ~ Wenas Mammoth Digs: a chance to view where the mammoth was discovered. Jim Briggs, who has been a volunteer on this project, will be our leader. Call Jeb at 933-1558 for details.

AUGUST ~

Saturday 7th ~ First Saturday BirdWalk at Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park ~ 8:00AM at bridge parking lot. (See above)

Kittitas Audubon

P.O. Box 1443

Ellensburg WA 98926



The Hooter - June/July 2010

Newsletter of Kittitas Audubon - <http://www.kittitasaudubon.org>
