The Hooter
Kittitas Audubon
January 2011

Membership Meeting - Thursday, January 20th
@ 7:00 PM ~ Hal Holmes Center

Many thanks to the Ellensburg Public Library for sponsoring our meetings here!

“Birds of Australia” presented by Dick, Katie, & Reilly Ambrose

Even if you are not a bird enthusiast you cannot help being impressed by the diversity and the beauty of Australian birds, including many endemic to Australia. Katie and I first visited Australia in 2004. Our grandson, Reilly, heard us talk about the country “down under” and hoped that we’d go back and take him along. We left in June 2010 spending time on the east coast of Australia, the Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu National Park near Darwin, and the Red Center. We camped most of the time, so we were awakened by the kookaburra’s laughing cry, and then the other birds joining in.

We saw rare birds that most visitors don’t have the opportunity to see such as the cassowary, Jabiru, and the lyrebird with its tail spread. We particularly enjoyed the kookaburras, the brightly colored parrots, and the Sacred and Azure Kingfishers.

Katie worked at Mt. Rainier National Park for 15 years; Dick was a park ranger for Washington State Parks for 26 years and now writes a regular hiking article for the Daily Record. We are enjoying retirement, with a lot of time outdoors camping, hiking, and traveling to distant lands. Reilly is eleven years old and loves to hike and camp and be outdoors. His sense of wonder is an inspiration to his grandparents.

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!)

February 17th: Members’ Slide Show Extravaganza ~ compiled by Steve Moore
March 17th: Undersea Photography of Puget Sound ~ David Jennings
April 21st: TBA (possible report on progress of Reecer Creek re-routing project)
KAS BOARD MEMBERS

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  Gloria Lindstrom 925-1807
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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 Kittitas Audubon, published monthly except for July.

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

Wintertime in Kittitas County can be a wonderful time to bird, whether it be car-touring the country roads, walking an outdoor trail, or sitting in your armchair by the fire. From our window, a resident Red-tailed Hawk has been seen three times swooping a rodent to tear apart on the fence post, a Kestrel twice do the same, and an immature Northern Harrier landing on a large patch of weedy prickly lettuce where the California Quail were hiding, then peer into and repeatedly dive into the weeds trying to retrieve a delicious meal (unsuccessful). An immature Cooper’s Hawk comes almost daily to try for a smaller fellow to eat, a comical sight as he peeks into the yew trees for the bird he apparently hears, and as he goes in one side, out flies the little bird on the other. So far, no luck for him have we seen, but he appears healthy, indicating success elsewhere.

To the black sunflower feeders and nut container come magpies, Steller’s Jays, and flickers, all of which tend to let the House Finches, Black-capped Chickadees, occasional goldfinch and Mountain Chickadee wait their turn as the juncos, Song Sparrow, and quail peck in the area below. We never tire of our “Bird Show”.

In the words of John Burroughs in 1919 from Birds and Bees comes the following. “How winter emphasizes the movements of the wild life! The snow and the cold are the white paper upon which the print is revealed. A track of a mouse, a bird, a squirrel, or a fox shows us at a glance how the warm pulse of life defies the embargo of winter. From cracks and rents in the frigid zone which creep down upon us at this season there issue tiny jets of warm life which play about here and there as if in the heyday of summer. The woods snap and explode with the frost, the ground is choked with snow, no sign of food is there for bird or beast, and yet here are these tiny bundles of cheer and contentment in feathers—the chickadees, the nuthatches, and their fellows.”

Happy New Year!!! Gloria Baldi
First Saturday BirdWalk ~ 12-4-2010

When the mornings are as cold as this winter, it is a surprise to have so many hardy souls meet for the December 4th BirdWalk, but eleven did and it was a beautiful walk with temperatures in the mid-twenties, broken clouds and a carpet of packed snow and ice. Hoarfrost on every tiny branch made a wonderland of white, along with ice on the river and lakes forming patterns of delicate lace. Twenty-one species were seen with a Cooper’s Hawk appearing within minutes at the end when most birders had dispersed.

The upper lake at Irene Rinehart park rarely freezes completely and consequently there is usually a nice array of waterfowl—which was the case this day. American Wigeon, Ring-necked Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Mallards, and Canada Geese were spotted. However, the most spectacular sight of the day was a pair of Bald Eagles dancing in the air in tandem. Up, down, separating and then swooping together—an absolutely beautiful performance as we stood in awe. Again, the Bird-Walk presented us a fantastic ‘moment in nature’.

Gloria Baldi

Kittitas Audubon Field Trips 2011 (January to March)

January
1st Saturday ~ First Saturday BirdWalk – Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park, 8:00 AM bridge parking lot. Go for group breakfast (details on page 8) and start walk at 9:00 am. Gloria & Jeb

15th Saturday ~ Third Saturday Birding by the Map - site #28 Vantage, Hwy I-90 North, Ginkgo State Park. Call Marianne Gordon for details. (509-964-2320)

22nd Saturday ~ Lower Valley Feeder Tour - How others feed winter birds. Call Jeb for details (933-1558).

February
5th Saturday ~ First Saturday BirdWalk – Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park, 8:00 AM bridge parking lot. Gloria & Jeb.

12th Saturday ~ Waterville Plateau – Winter migrants - Call Steve Moore for details and sign-up (509-933-1179)

18th to 21st ~ Great Backyard Bird Count. You can count birds in parks, ponds and most any place. If you would like to participate call Marianne Gordon (509-964-2320).

19th Saturday ~ Winter Birds of Eastern Kittitas County - Scott Downes: limited space; call Jeb (933-1558) to reserve your place.

26th Saturday ~ Photographing Winter Raptors - Call Cricket Webb to sign up (509-674-4035).

March
5th Saturday ~ First Saturday BirdWalk – Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park, 8:00 AM Bridge parking lot. Gloria and Jeb.

19th Saturday ~ Third Saturday Birding by the Map – site #5 Hundley Road; call Marianne (509-964-2320) to sign up.
Ellensburg Christmas Bird Count - December 18, 2010

Thirty observers in 10 parties, plus eight at feeders; 67 party hours, plus 2 hours owling.

Light snowfall in the AM, sunny at noon, then overcast; 24-29 degrees, no wind, snow cover 4-12".

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The recent spread of Eur. Collared Doves north and west across the country from Florida is an ornithological phenomena in action, and the Ellensburg CBC is part of it. A few of these wood-pigeons have been seen in and around Ellensburg for the last few years, and were first recorded on the CBC here only in Dec 2008. The 50 found this year is a very high count for such a short time. The high count for one location was 20 at the old Woldale School west of town.

Collared Doves spread from Turkey and Asia across Europe during the 1900s. They were introduced into the Bahamas about 1975, and spread to Florida by 1982. With 3-4 broods of two per year, and nesting during any month that is warm enough, they can increase rapidly. The species appears to not displace Mourning Doves nor Rock Pigeons.

Two Virginia Rails found underneath the log bridge along the river off Ringer Loop were the first ever for the Ellensburg CBC. Congratulations, Scott Downes!

There are new high counts for Barn Owl (11 vs. 8 in 2008), Great Horned Owl (19 vs. 18 last year), Dark-eyed Junco (1852 vs. 1417 in 2008), and for the well-marked eastern U.S. subspecies Slate-colored Junco (10 vs. 4 in 1992). In addition, species found in numbers significantly above their average for the past 12 years were: Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Red-tailed Hawk, Common Snipe, N. Flicker, Steller’s Jay, Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Varied Thrush. The Double-crested Cormorant was the first seen on the CBC since 1988, and the two Yellow-rumped Warblers were the high count since 1978.

From the other perspective, Mallards, Rough-legged Hawks, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were in notably low numbers, and we found no Short-eared Owls, Barred Owls, waxwings of either species, nor Pine Siskins.

All this comparing and conjecturing is made possible by the willingness of count participants to spend a cold day outdoors counting birds. Thank you, and see you next year on Saturday, December 17th, 2011.

Phil Mattocks, compiler

Observers: Jeb & Gloria Baldi (co-compiler), Lee Barnes, Gordon Crane, Joan Cawley-Crane, Don & Sharon Cocheba, Gary, Gia, and Teal Cummisk, Jan Demorest, Scott Downes, Joan Dumas, Deb Essman, Kay Forsythe, Tom & Diane Gauron, Justin Gibbens, Marianne Gordon, Steve & Linda Hall, Craig Johnson, Shelley & Yvonne Johnson, Don Knake, Noel Knake, Doug Kuehn, Hal & Gloria Lindstrom, Phil Mattocks (co-compiler), Steve Moore, Norm Peck, Jo Ellen Richards, Beth Rogers, Gerry & Marilyn Sorensen, Cynthia Wilson, Shana Winegeart, Kittitas Audubon Society.

For the complete count turn to Page 5.

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Call for photos for 2011 KAS Members’ Slide Show:

Deadline is February 10th.

Send digital images (at least 200 KB but less than 1 MB, “jpeg”) via email, or print copies. Please include a brief description of the photo: who, what, when, where, story? You may submit as many as you like.

Send to: Steve Moore, 712 E 2nd Ave, Ellensburg, WA 98926

or s.moore@kvalley.com

See the December 2010 Hooter for more details.
Highest ever counts and **one new species** for the 33 years of the Ellensburg CBC are in **boldface**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Canada Goose</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>N. Flicker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gadwall</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Northern Shrike</td>
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<td>Am. Wigeon</td>
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<td>Steller’s Jay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mallard</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>Black-billed Magpie</td>
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<td>Green-winged Teal</td>
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<td>Am. Crow</td>
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<td>Ring-necked Duck</td>
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<td>Common Raven</td>
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<td>Bufflehead</td>
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<td>Horned Lark</td>
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<td>Black-capped Chickadee</td>
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<td>Hooded Merganser</td>
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<td>Wild Turkey</td>
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<td>Pacific Wren</td>
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<td><strong>Double-crested Cormorant</strong></td>
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<td>Golden-crowned Kinglet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bald Eagle</td>
<td>23a,4i</td>
<td>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</td>
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<td>Am. Robin</td>
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<td>Sharp-shinned Hawk</td>
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<td>Varied Thrush</td>
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<td>Starling</td>
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<td>Red-tailed Hawk</td>
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<td>Rough-legged Hawk</td>
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<td><strong>Dark-eyed Junco</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Prairie Falcon</strong></td>
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<td><strong>“Slate-colored Junco”</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Virginia Rail</strong></td>
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<td>Red-winged Blackbird</td>
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<td>Killdeer</td>
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<td>Brewer’s Blackbird</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Brown-headed Cowbird</td>
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<td>Cassin’s Finch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mourning Dove</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>House Finch</td>
<td>1390</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Barn Owl</strong></td>
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<td>Am. Goldfinch</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Great Horned Owl</strong></td>
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<td>House Sparrow</td>
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<td>Belted Kingfisher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downy Woodpecker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hairy Woodpecker</td>
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</table>
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.

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.

12/3/10 ~ Hi all ~ Last Saturday we saw a Eurasian Collared Dove in our neighborhood in West Ellensburg. It might still be around during the CBC.

          Gordon

12/3/10 ~ Collared doves are also being seen fairly regularly near the intersection of Pine and Tacoma (2-3 of them). I suspect we'll see large numbers recorded on most CBCs including Ellensburg. I'd personally be quite amazed if EUCD weren't recorded in double digit numbers on the CBC.

          Scott Downes

          (and he was absolutely right!)

12/7/10 ~ We've seen a Varied Thrush in our backyard for the past couple of days, sampling the old apples that we tossed out last week. What gorgeous creatures they are!

          Jan Demorest in Ellensburg

12/7/10 ~ We too have had Varied Thrushes in our yard - three that we know of. They arrived with the first snow fall and have been busy eating the apples on the tree plus those we put out. On one of our very cold days, a Cooper's Hawk had one for lunch - sob, sob.

          Gloria L.

12/8/10 ~ I saw, what is believed to be the first hummingbird in the winter at Snoqualmie Pass! Likely it was an Anna's. I am getting some nectar boiled up as are some of my neighbors!!!!

          Chris Caviezel

12/13/10 ~ Many of you will think I'm crazy to be excited about this new yard bird. I spotted a Magpie. I have never seen them up this high.

          Cricket

The Reading Owl

Occasionally Kittitas Audubon receives a book to review which is then placed with our librarian for members to borrow. The Forgotten Expedition by Leon R. Powers is such a book, written after his retirement from a career as a biology professor. Joe Meuchel provided the following report.

"When Powers was a graduate student at Idaho State University in 1973 he stumbled onto an account in an historical publication of a 1907 biological expedition in central Idaho. Intrigued, he begins to dig for more information.

It takes him five chapters to unearth documents that describe the original expedition.

He finds the diary and field notes left by this expedition and takes to the field with some students to retrace the steps of the 1907 expedition. Day by day, he quotes and interprets the often-cryptic notations in the 100-year-old diary and field notebooks as they camp along with an old team of horses and a dog through the Payette area of central Idaho. The book gives a great insight into the day-to-day activities of a small biological expedition of its day, as well as their related activities. This is one of the most interesting ways to go back in time.

Once you get past the first five chapters, it's a pretty good read!"

Joe Meuchel

Editor's note: Leon Powers has also published books on birds of prey.

Sharp-shinned Hawk at Bi-Mart Deli!

Photo by Cricket Webb

12/18/10 ~ Hi Kittens, This picture, taken in the parking lot of Bi-Mart, is an example of why I take my camera everywhere!

          Cricket
GET “THE 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 a quick link to the new Hooter.

BECOME A KITTITAS AUDUBON MEMBER!! (Or renew your membership)

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

Two options are available:

OPTION 1: Membership in National Audubon includes a subscription to the magazine, Audubon, membership in the local chapter (KAS), and KAS monthly newsletter, THE HOOTER

_____ Join as a new National Audubon member $20 (includes KAS membership)
_____ Renew a National Audubon membership $35

Make check payable to: National Audubon Society Include this form and mail to: Membership Data Center, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235

Name ___________________________ Address __________________________________________
City _____________________________ State, ZIP _________________________________________

Chapter Code COZY220Z

OPTION 2: Membership in only the local chapter, KAS, includes the monthly newsletter, THE HOOTER

_____ Join the local Kittitas Audubon Society (KAS) chapter $20
_____ Renew your KAS membership $20
_____ Make a donation to KAS $_____ (amount)

Make check payable to KAS and mail to: KAS, P.O. Box 1443, Ellensburg, WA 98926

Name ___________________________ Phone ___________________________
Address ___________________________ Cell _________________________
City _____________________________ Email _______________________
State, ZIP ___________________________ Would you like to receive The Hooter electronically?

Yes _____ No, prefer paper edition ______

Kittitas Audubon is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational society.
All memberships and donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

Membership forms are also available on our Web site: Kittitasaudubon.org.
For membership information contact Membership Chair, Tuck Forsythe ~ forsythe (at) fairpoint.net

Check out our website ~ see The Hooter in COLOR at www.kittitasaudubon.org
Upcoming KAS Field Trips

**JANUARY FIELD TRIPS**

1st ~ First Saturday BirdWalk
- Start the New Year right!
Join other birders for breakfast on New year’s morning!
Because the BirdWalk actually falls on New Year's Day, we will meet at the bridge parking lot at 8:00 AM and start the New Year with a group breakfast in a restaurant near Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park. The BirdWalk will then begin at 9:00 AM from the bridge parking lot. This will allow the birds to awake for our search. *(If one does not want to breakfast, then feel free to meet at the 9:00 hour.)* Dress warmly for the two-hour walk on uneven ground and bring binoculars. Leaders: Jeb & Gloria.

15th ~ Third Saturday Birding by the Map:
Site #28 from the Kittitas County birding map encompasses Vantage, Hwy 1-90 North & Ginkgo State Park. Call Marianne Gordon 964-2320 for details.

22nd ~ Lower Valley Feeder Tour:
A visit to several KAS members’ homes to view how they feed winter birds. Space is limited. Call Jeb 933-1558 for details.

**THANKS TO KITTITAS COUNTY BUSINESSES SUPPORTING KAS!**

Inland Internet, Roslyn, donates Internet service for our Website: [http://www.kittitasaudubon.org](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
P.O. Box 1443
Ellensburg WA 98926

Chester A. Reed (1876-1912)