



HOO HOO HOO.....

The Hooter

Kittitas Audubon

October 2011

"A Report on 'Our' Spotted Owls" presented by Stan Sovern **Membership Meeting - Thursday, October 20th**

@ 7:00 PM ~ Hal Holmes Center

Are you aware that Kittitas Audubon's logo/mascot is the Northern Spotted Owl? Hence our newsletter is named *The Hooter*, telling all about the bird news in our county and beyond.

Please join Kittitas Audubon for the latest information on and status of the Northern Spotted Owl in Kittitas County, Washington State, and the Pacific Northwest. Our speaker will be Stan Sovern of USFS. Stan has been monitoring the Northern Spotted Owl for nearly 25 years in Kittitas County, and during this time he has collected a wealth of photos and information he is willing to share with Kittitas Audubon.

The meeting will be held at 7:00 PM on October 20th at the Hal Holmes Center adjacent to the Public Library. There will be a short business meeting prior to Stan's presentation, and "sweet treats" over conversation at the end. As with all Audubon events the public is always welcome.

Meetings are held on the **3rd Thursday of each month**, September through May.



Web photo



USFS Photo

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

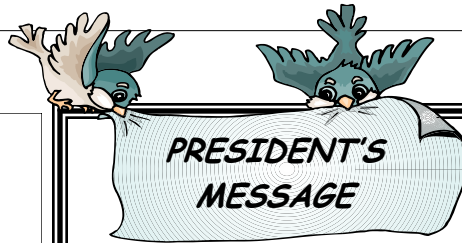
AUDUBON COUNCIL OF WASHINGTON ~ ACOW

The Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) will be meeting, **Saturday, October 8th, in Moses Lake**. This will be a one day event starting at 9:00 am. All Audubon members are welcome to attend and help determine the future of a state presence of Audubon and what that should look like. Should we have a state office? What should the purpose of that office be? Coordinator, lobbyist, scientist? Who pays? Lots of important questions to consider. We need everyone to provide input. Please call Gloria Lindstrom 925-1807 or Gloria Baldi 933-1558 if you would like to attend. Kittitas Audubon will also furnish a few snacks for the attendees. If you would like to help with this task, please give us a call.



"Keep a green tree in your heart and perhaps a songbird will come."

Chinese Proverb



KAS BOARD MEMBERS

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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 members & other 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](mailto:bobcat@kvalley.com) or snail mail to Jan Demorest, Hooter Editor, 712 E 2nd Ave, Ellensburg, WA 98926. Submissions need to be in by the 20th of the preceding month.***

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This month's message is a potpourri of items. Possibly one will be an item to stir you into action.

First, for any of you who have been KAS members for a few years, you will remember *Audubon Washington*, the state office that was a 'clearing house' for all chapters in Washington to seek advice and/or ideas when needed. Unfortunately, when tough economic times came, so did the demise of the state office leaving a 'bare-bones' staff.

One of the advantages of the office was having an environmental lobbyist in the state legislature to help chapters keep abreast of issues that were being reviewed and debated. Thus, we were given an opportunity to voice our concerns and/or support. The lobbyist worked with other environmental groups, which allowed 'the Audubons' to be most effective. Representation from every chapter formed the Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW). ACOW is meeting October 8<sup>th</sup> to decide its future. See a short announcement in this issue.

Second item of note is that KAS could use some help with educational activities. The preservation of natural resources depends on those of the future and only through contact with the natural environment will citizens protect it. A classroom visit, a day at CWU at "The Nature of Night" activity, working at the Audubon table at the E-3 Event in January, or other one-day demonstrations, are enjoyable activities with adults or children of several age groups. There is no limit to the opportunities, ideas, and natural visual aides available ~ and it always is fun. Whether you plan or help with one event ~ or become the Education Chair and direct/arrange several presentations, you would be filling shoes that need filling!

And lastly, in September Kittitas Audubon lost a charter member that many knew and truly enjoyed. Peggy Schnebly, along with her husband, Dorse (who passed away a few years back), were artists, plant and mushroom enthusiasts, as well as birders. All who knew this couple were delighted to spend time with them in the hills or in the sage viewing the tiny flowers or the first bluebird of the season. A tribute to both Peggy and Dorse appears on page 4 of this issue.

*Gloria Baldi* President

*The mission of Kittitas Audubon is to develop an appreciation of nature through education and conservation, with a focus on birds.*



**September 3rd ~ First Saturday BirdWalk ~ Rodeo weekend!** September's BirdWalk always takes second place to all the Labor Day festivities of the Fair and Rodeo, and that was the case again this year. A beautiful morning in the 70's turned out only three birders—who spotted a total of fifteen species. The roadway into Irene Rinehart Park was busy, busy, busy: families reserving their spots on the lawn for a warm day ahead, CWU's Cross Country track team running pre-trials for upcoming races, and people taking their dogs for morning walks.

Flocks of Canada Geese honking overhead signal migration, along with many immature Western Tanagers, and both the Townsend's and Orange-crowned Warblers busily working the cottonwoods for bugs. Downy Woodpeckers 'beaked' under the bark, and one lone Western Wood Pewee was hawking insects from the air. It was a lovely morning but we scuttled along as our weekend company was beckoning us home.

**September 24, Saturday ~ Chelan Ridge Hawk Monitoring ~** Four of us got an early start towards the Columbia gorge north of Wenatchee. On the way, geese and just a few ducks, cormorants, and a grebe were spotted in the Columbia.



Chelan Ridge Raptor Migration Survey Site photo by Steve M.

Hawkwatch International/Chelan Ridge Raptor Migration Project volunteers, occupying a high ridge north of Lake Chelan, tally hawks on their journey south at summer's end; data over the past 18 years help determine changes and trends in regional populations. We met three counters, Catherine, Mike, and Chatty, who occupy the station daily from mid-August to October's end – atop a granite block with an eye-popping vantage of deep valleys north and south, endless ridges to

the west, and the Columbia Basin to the east. Hawks sweeping up on drafts are suddenly just above us, quickly identified as to species, age and sex, where possible. We spent the middle of the day with the crew, in bright sunshine and a bit of breeze, as a variety of accipiters (mostly Sharp-shinned Hawks, a few Cooper's), an osprey, and one redtail soared over.

There was an impressive show by a resident Merlin (not tallied), flying above our heads and around a decoy owl on a tall pole that attracts the birds, in between forays of catching moths in mid-air. In mid-afternoon, a radio call from a nearby trap-and-band station



photo by Sherry Bayles

Hawkwatch staff volunteer, Catherine, with juvenile Northern Goshawk

(more HWI volunteers) reported a Northern Goshawk capture, so a bunch of us, visitors plus monitors, rushed back down the trail for a rare view of this marvelous bird before it was released, (by Jan "...be still my beating heart..."), a final highlight of our visit. We headed home in the fading light with images of soaring birds in our heads, feeling blessed by the gift of their fierce presences.

Northern Goshawk (juvenile)



photo by Sherry Bayles

It was just twenty years ago last spring when a car pulled up to the corral where I was teaching some yearling colts to lead. The couple got out and climbed up on the corral rails with practiced ease. As I rode over the lady said, "I'm Peggy Schnebly and this is my husband, Dorse; we're kin of Cheryl's. We have a place up Coleman Canyon, and the 'moccasin telegraph' has been working overtime. Thought we'd stop by to get acquainted."

The upshot was they were going to an Audubon presentation on grizzly bears and thought I might want to join them. After that they made it a point to invite me along to meetings and birding trips. We became fast friends; I visited them often at their ranch where we swapped horse stories, books, and anything else came to mind—always over food. Peggy loved horses, was an accomplished rider and had had her share of associated wrecks. Dorse loved his cows and was full of stories about the Schnebly Land and Cattle Company and the days they ran cattle from the Kittitas Valley to the Columbia River. Even after they retired and leased their land, Dorse kept a few favorite cows to look after and ventured out to drive the feed truck in winter.

After raising their children, Peggy went to work at the CWU Library. She loved to read and enjoyed helping others find what they needed. She was an interesting writer and it is our loss that none of her writing was ever published. Dorse was an accomplished naturalist as well as rancher; he knew his plants and was the local expert on mushrooms. In an era when ranchers were not openly nature lovers, Peggy and Dorse were unashamedly bird watchers and naturalists.

Both Peggy and Dorse were of valley pioneer stock. Dorse was from the original Schneblys who arrived early as publishers and ranchers, the Schnebly family registering the first cattle brand (the Bar Balloon) in the Territory of Washington. Peggy is from the Charleton family, having been born on a ranch on Naneum Creek. They both attended one-room grade schools and graduated from Ellensburg High School. Both attended college until World War II interfered; then they began ranching and raising a family on Lester Road. They loved sharing their growing-up days from when the community was sparsely settled and everybody knew everybody else.

Peggy and Dorse will be missed...

**Note:** Joe mentioned Peggy's writing had not been published. The following is a report she passed to me some time ago as she sorted files. Because of the continuing Bluebird Project led by Jan Demorest and Steve Moore, I thought it might be interesting to share one of the initial efforts on the KAS bluebird trails. ~GB

### *AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE COLOCKUM BLUEBIRD TRAIL* by Peggy Schnebly

As is frequently said in the news media, "there's some good news and there's some bad news". These stats on the Colockum Bluebird Trail come from 90 houses placed along Colockum Road from the valley to the top of the pass where Kittitas Audubon and Wenatchee Audubon met to drive a golden spike. We placed our #90 box on the same tree with their #1 and agreed that the first box to have a nest was the winner and would treat the other to a picnic potluck. Alas, ours had no nest and Wenatchee's house was gone without a clue when we checked on December 31, 1989. We need to pursue this.

The percentages of occupancy on our side, give or take a few:

|            |                                      |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Bluebirds  | -----15                              |
| Wrens      | -----20                              |
| Empty      | -----20                              |
| Mouse      | -----15                              |
| Casualties | ----- 20                             |
| Other      | -----10 (including one tree swallow) |

While we could wish for bluebirds in all of our rentals, the good news is that about half the total did house birds. The bad news is that some of the houses "strayed", some were casualties to gunshot wounds, and several lost their foundations... one to a chain saw:

Of the seven houses place in Caribou Canyon, only three could be accounted for, but one of those had a bluebird nest with feather. Also checked were a few houses on the old Vantage highway...a Sollie-Hawkins project...one contained a bluebird egg

(Continued on page 5)

**...or, more than you ever thought you'd learn about birds in one week!**

Jan Demorest and Steve Moore spent six very full (and wonderful) days in early August camping at McDaniel Lake in the Bethel Ridge area, with the PSBO (Puget Sound Bird Observatory) folks and 10 other students (from Chicago to Texas to Alaska), learning the basics of capturing and banding passerines (songbirds). There were informal lectures in camp given by Dan Froehlich, naturalist and licensed bander, who also was our most able guide (along with interns and other experienced banders) in the field ~ Cascades Banding Camp: a week-long intensive field training in basic bird-handling, ageing, and sexing of birds, and mist-netting. We learned how to put the tiny bands on their tiny legs, and to record



Jan holds a Warbling Vireo while Steve and another student look on. Photo by Megan Lyden

all this information on the data sheets, and, at last, to free them to fly away. This was just an introduction, but we will now be able to volunteer and get more experience when banding projects are being conducted. These studies are essential in monitoring the health of bird populations, their productivity and their chances of survival. We hope to apply

this in the future to banding "our" bluebirds in Kittitas Valley. Even if you never plan to be a bird bander, this camp is an invaluable way to learn more than you ever asked for about birds!

*More details in a later issue of The Hooter! Jan D.*



*Peg Schnebly story (Continued from page 4)*

while a second, sadly, had a family of ready-to-fledge dead bluebirds. We noted that a larger percentage of houses lower in the valley contained mouse nests compared to those at a little higher elevation.

All of our houses have been cleaned and readied for the 1990 renters which are frequently seen migrating on the wind in our corner of the valley by early March. We gratefully acknowledge the friends who have helped us with the house-cleaning and statistics.

We deem it a successful first year. It was lots of fun!

More about bluebirds: We were surprised to see two Mountain Bluebirds in Coleman Canyon on December 28. We had never seen any so late before. Cal and Beth Underhill reported seeing a single male Mountain Bluebird on January 14, 1990. They have fledged several broods from their boxes and report having both the Western and the

Mountain at their home in Cooke Canyon. So far, only Mountain Blues have been seen in the Colockum.

An incidental: Bluebird house #81 on the Colockum may serve as an area marker if you wish to observe a tree occupied by the Black-backed (Three-toed?) Woodpecker. Peterson says their presence can be detected by large patches of bark scaled from dead conifers. In this case, it is a live pine and the patch surrounds the nesting hole. The babies could easily be heard by laying an ear against the tree trunk.

Second incidental: A walk up the river along the Columbia from where the old bridge used to be may yield a sighting of the pert little Canyon Wren...a pair, in fact, as well as a Bald Eagle and many water birds. Out of the wind, against sun-warmed rocks, an Indian Spirit may walk with you .... silently....

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](mailto:subscribe@yahoogroups.com). Reply to the first email about Birdkitt that you receive from "yahoogroups". To unsubscribe: send email to birdkitt

- [unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com). If you have difficulty, email Beth Rogers [kittittasaudubon@inland.net](mailto:kittittasaudubon@inland.net) or Chris Caviezel [chris.caviezel@gmail.com](mailto: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.

**9-11-11** Hi Birdkitts ~ now I've seen it all. This afternoon we had a young Dusky Grouse in the yard. We were rebuilding our front porch when I looked around and saw it sitting in one of our ponderosa pine trees along the driveway. I have no idea why this one strayed down into the flatlands. They are baling hay across the road from us so there was plenty of noisy activ-



Dusky Grouse

Photo by Deb Essman

ity, not to mention our hammering and cussing at a project that should not have been tackled on such a hot day. I ran and got the camera. After a few good photo shots, we corralled the dogs and went inside. The bird then flew to the ground and chased bugs around under the trees before disappearing under the ocean spray and choke cherries. Weird ~ Deb and Bill on the Brick Mill Rd north of Kittitas

*\*Editor's Note from Internet: "The Blue Grouse was recently split into two species, the coastal Sooty Grouse *Dendragapus fuliginosus* and the interior Dusky Grouse *Dendragapus obscurus*."*

**9-14-11** I asked Michael Schroeder (WDFW grouse expert) where he sees the hybrid line between Sooty and Dusky for the county. His response:

"The birds in the Colockum appear to be Dusky. The birds in the Teanaway appear to be mixed, so

maybe that is the line. The birds on the lower Manastash Ridge area appeared to be mixed (orange apteria instead of yellow or red). The birds higher up (to the west) were clearly Sooty Grouse." ~ Scott Downes, Yakima

**9-16-11** I have a 'first ever' sighting to compare with Deb's Dusky Grouse lost in the grasslands-- this morning a group of at least a dozen W. Bluebirds dropped out of nowhere into my little clearing in the woods southwest of Cle Elum, a mix of adults and juveniles, some of which still had tufts of down sticking out. Travelling companions were about a half-dozen faded Yellow-rumped Warblers. They all busied themselves with harvesting bugs in the grass for about an hour, then were gone as quickly as they had arrived. A tight itinerary for points south I would presume.

~ Kyle Kennedy, Cle Elum area

### HAWK PERCH POLES:

There was a lot of interest from local residents in the proposal for a "perch pole" project, but we're currently at an impasse while we figure out a reasonable source for some appropriate poles. The Forest



Service has halted all harvesting in the Cle Elum District, so scavenging for poles won't work there. If nothing else develops, we will go ahead with cut lumber, although that will involve some dollars' expenditure. Perhaps some member has a stand of appropriate small trees that need thinning? If so get in touch with Bud Rechterman, 962-4508.

### A new movie for birders!

It's a great time to be a birder. Not only is late summer and early fall prime migration time, but it's also when a new birding movie is scheduled to hit movie theaters all over the country (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, October 14).

The movie, **The Big Year**, is inspired by Mark Obmascik's book of the same name, which tells the true story of the legendary 1998 Big Year competition. (A Big Year is when birders spend an entire year seeking out as many birds as possible.)

Steve Martin, Jack Black, and Owen Wilson play the three main birders featured in the movie.

Don't miss it!





**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:*  
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Check out the Grays Harbor Paper website at:  
<http://www.ghplp.com/index.html>

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*Let us know what you think!*

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

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



Darling Bird Studios, ©2007 UNA

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

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**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

### October 1st ~ First Saturday BirdWalk

Rinehart Park ~ Join us for a day of fall birding, as we begin our **10th year** of Saturday Birdwalks. Thanks to Gloria and Jeb for this local tradition! October offers the dozen or so regular residents, some migrants like waxwings, Yellow-rumped Warblers and rare pipits; hawks are on the move; there are arrivals from the north like grebes, and always a few surprises. 8 am at the bridge parking lot for a 2-3 hour walk with some walking on uneven ground. Jeb & Gloria Baldi lead.

**8th-9th ~ Saturday-Sunday ~ Samish Flats and Skagit Delta.** In eastern Puget Sound, the tidal flats of Padilla Bay and bird-rich farmland and marsh of Samish Island and of Fir Island (Skagit delta) offer terrific lowland birding with much variety: waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, and

small birds. We'll drive country roads, take short hikes on levees and marsh trails, and stay nearby in a motel. **Please sign up by Wednesday, Oct 5th;** call Steve & Jan, 509-933-1179.

**Nov. 5 ~ First Saturday Birdwalk** ~ Rinehart Park ~ Fall color in the cottonwood grove. Ducks, mergansers, and the occasional coot are joining the park regulars. The hawks are hungry, kinglets are arriving from the mountains, and even a Bewick's Wren is possible. Robins will be heading south soon. 8 am at the bridge parking lot. Jeb & Gloria Baldi lead.

**Look for future field trips and programs on our website:**

[www.kittitasaudubon.org](http://www.kittitasaudubon.org)

### **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*

*P.O. Box 1443*

*Ellensburg WA 98926*

Image ~ Wild Birds Unlimited Website



*The Hooter - October 2011*

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