



The Hooter

Kittitas Audubon December 2011



No Membership Meeting/Program in December ~ Instead:

The 33rd Annual KAS Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 18th

See Page 8 for details and how to participate!



Report from the field:

REELFOOT LAKE, TENNESSEE ~ In the winter of 1811-1812, several devastating earthquakes hit along the Mississippi River. The ground virtually rearranged itself, causing a large area in northwest Tennessee to subside. That water-filled area is now Reelfoot Lake, approximately 18,000 acres with shallow water and numerous standing snags providing habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife.

My daughter, Susan, and I took our first free day to investigate. On the 2-hour drive there, we sighted many "usual" Tennessee birds: Bluejays, Cardinals, Black Vultures, and even one Snowy Egret standing in a field.

Our first stop was at a state park near the south end of the lake ~ best birds were Bald Eagle, Double-crested Cormorant, Pied-billed Grebe, a Great Blue Heron perched in a tree, and a lone White Pelican. Driving around the corner, we were puzzled. Along the far shore we could make out a white line. Surf? No wind. Rocks? Tennessee doesn't have white rocks. Wait! Something moved ~ a large bird jostling for position: thousands of White Pelicans! Reelfoot Lake, like Malheur in Oregon, is an ideal place for them because they forage in shallow water.

The north and northeast parts of the lake are a National Wildlife Refuge, the latter with a paved road through bottomland forest to the edge of the lake. Woodpecker heaven: Pileated, Hairy, Red-bellied and flicker. There were so many Yellow-rumped Warblers we feared they are taking over the world! The lake full of dead leaves waving in the wind made it difficult to make out any ducks. Besides thousands of coots feeding on the pond weed, we managed Mallards, a shoveler, and a wigeon.

The north lake unit, due to be flooded the day after we were there, consists of flat fields leased to farmers to raise grain and then leave 25% for the wintering birds. The only bird we saw here was an Eastern Phoebe. On the west side of the lake, we got close looks at more Cardinals and some White-throated Sparrows.

Leaving Tiptonville, the town closest to the lake, the last birds we saw were American Kestrels sitting on wires, bringing our total to 34 species for the day. Mid-November is a good time of year to visit the area. The fishermen and vacationers have all gone home for the season. Go on a weekday and it's even quieter ... we're planning another trip in the spring!

Marianne Gordon



Shallow mangrove habitat ~ NW Tennessee

KAS BOARD MEMBERS

President – Gloria Baldi	933-1558
Vice President - Vacant	
Secretary – Jim Briggs	933-2231
Treasurer – Marte Fallshore	925-6745
Conservation – Janet Nelson	674-6165
Education – Vacant	
Field Trips – Steve Moore	933-1179
*Newsletter – Jan Demorest	933-1179
*Historian – Vacant	
Programs – Jeb Baldi	933-1558
Publicity – Gerry Sorenson	968-4857
Wildlife Habitat – Joe Meuchel	933-3011
*Bluebird boxes – Jan Demorest	933-1179
Past President – Gloria Lindstrom	925-1807
Membership – Tuck Forsythe	925-2356
*Christmas Bird Count – Phil Mattocks	962-2191
*Librarian – Ginger Jensen	925-5816
Social/Greeter – Kay Forsythe	925-2356

*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!

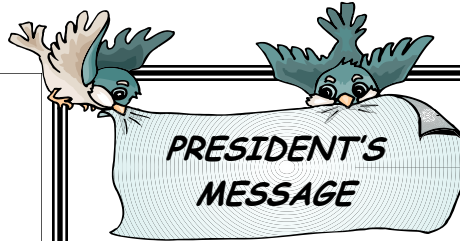
Send in your stories & photos!

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

Several years ago people of this state voted to require a percentage of power be acquired through the use of renewable or 'green power'.

Wind projects were to be "appropriately sited", but never was there a definition for that term. Although close to 80% of Washington State's power comes from hydro-power, it is not considered renewable. The wind industry has since become a big presence in Kittitas County and in 2008 an area in eastern Kittitas county was designated for industrial wind towers.

Wind energy has been labeled as renewable. However, when one considers the steel processed and the rare earth elements necessary, the fuel consumed in the erection of a wind project with manufactured parts from Asia and Europe, the killing of the birds and bats, plus the destruction of habitat, especially shrub-steppe lands, the label appears questionable. To date there has been no reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from the erection of towers. (Because US energy is derived mainly from coal and natural gas with less than one percent from oil, there is a minuscule reduction in oil consumption from wind power.)

When wind power was first proposed in Kittitas County, the KAS Board studied the issue and voted with a large majority to oppose industrial wind projects in this area. The decision was **based on the probable effects to birds, but our findings revealed bat populations are also severely affected.** Recently we revisited the issue and our decision has not changed.

Kittitas Valley is on a bird migration route, especially obvious in the fall with large numbers of birds of prey (raptors) coming over the ridges. The wind industry acknowledges that each wind project in this valley kills both birds and bats, but the numbers are only estimated as there is no efficient method for determining the exact number of deaths. There is an accepted protocol to statistically determine bird kills but KAS has always contended the method is inadequate because pre-monitoring is not performed as frequently as necessary, or any monitoring for longer than one year. Night studies during migration at altitudes where blades spin, or to determine what species may be migrating at those heights, are not required. **There has never been any accumulative data collected combining the projected and/or real kills of all wind projects in this county.**

Kill numbers are probably higher, as evidenced with 20 years of constant monitoring in Klickitat County by Columbia Gorge Audubon to the south of us. The organization

*(Continued on page 4)*

**November's First Saturday BirdWalk** ~ A great fall morning with the temperature a little below freezing and most of the leaves off the trees, making viewing easier. A big crowd of 25, including about 10 Webelos and Bear scouts with parents, showed up to look for birds on a cool sunshine morn at Rinehart Park. Dividing into two groups, Gerry and Jeb took the younger scouts searching *Howard's Trail* from the bridge parking lot through the trees upstream along the Yakima. Both scouts and parents showed great interest in the birds we found, especially the California Quail, Dark-eyed Junco, Bald Eagle, and Winter Wren. We identified 17 species, mostly our usual and winter resident species, including the above birds plus Killdeer and Belted Kingfisher. A highlight was a trio of Bonaparte's Gulls in the main pond, a first for our records at the park. ~ *Jeb & Steve*

**12 November: Iron Horse Trail to Yakima River Bridge.** Ellensburg's first snow of the season made for a colorful walk west from Highway 97 along the old railway track, out to the bridge

and back. A mature Bald Eagle stood sentinel in a pine, and a Great Blue Heron watched from the peak of a barn roof. Ducks were absent, but the accipiters were out in force, eyeing the brushy habitat for potential meals. Of the three hawks seen, a Cooper's Hawk held its perch on a pole as we walked close by underneath with good views. The other two were most likely Cooper's, but kept their distance, backlit by the cloudy-bright sun. Typical... Nearer the river, a Downy Woodpecker played in the cottonwood limbs. 20 species was our total for the walk.

~ *Steve Moore*



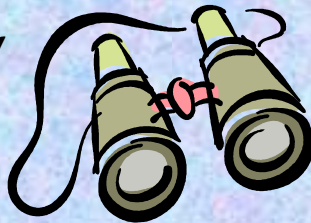
**Cooper's Hawk**

Photo by SCM

*Please Return Binoculars!*

Last July binoculars were loaned to a mother and her daughter to use on the First Saturday BirdWalk.

Because they left early the binoculars were also offered for use on the way back to their car. I need to retrieve the binoculars so other beginning birders may use them. Please give me a call. ~ *Jeb @ 933-1558*



**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.**



**"A PLACE TO SIT AND WATCH THE WORLD"**

*This is the first pole of the 2011 perch pole event; it guards the timothy and Sudan grass field of Bill Mundy, just off, and visible from, Masterson Road. Mr. Mundy seemed very satisfied to be the first to have a hawk perch pole this season.*

*That's Bud R. and Jeb B. feeling pretty good about it too...*

*Thanks to Bud Rechterman for submitting this report, and to him and Jeb Baldi for keeping this project alive!*

**If you would like to help with this project, or know of someone who might want a perch pole, volunteers are most welcome! Please call Jeb at 933-1558 or Bud at 962-4508.**





## e~Bird

Wanted to put a plug in for "ebird". It's an easy online data entry tool that many birders throughout the state are using for entering their data when they go birding. I noticed though, that few Kittitas county locals appear to be using it. One benefit is that it can make

very useful graphs of abundance of local places and track trends and arrivals and departures. Marianne Gordon asked for some of the data I reported yesterday on the trip that I led for a Seattle Audubon Master Birder's class. I had already input that data and it can be viewed by anybody logged into ebird.

It is very easy to enter the data (a list typically only takes 5-10 minutes to enter). For those that have entered data for the GBBC, the entry of data here is as easy if not easier than that. Both current checklists and those past records can be easily entered. Birders in Yakima County have been using it for a couple of years now and this is starting to show some neat trends once the data is in there.

Check it out at: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>

*Thanks to Scott Downes for this information.*

*"In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations" ~ from the Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy*



1796 engraving

*(Continued from page 2)*

took a special interest because a wind power permit was issued to the Big Horn Wind Energy Project within an *Audubon Important Bird Area*. The wind company predicted the annual raptor kill (separated from total bird kills) would be 3 to 4 birds, **where years of monitoring has found the actual raptor kill is 31 to 49 birds per year**. Because the monitoring has been done with much more diligence than is performed at few other wind projects, the results are indicative that far more kills are occurring than predicted. (The American Bird Conservancy estimates that **440,000 birds** per year are presently killed by towers.) **With approximately one-third of Washington State's 300+ bird species already in steep decline, killing of more should be of great concern.**

Destruction of habitat is another concern of KAS. Although a small area of land is required for the towers, a vast amount of land is required for the connecting roads to carry the pre-constructed towers, as well as, construction of necessary transmission lines. Most of the land where projects are erected in Kittitas County is **shrub-steppe, the fastest disappearing habitat in Washington State**. Many species of wildlife and plants depend on this type habitat for existence. Some examples of birds are Sage Thrasher, Sage and Brewer's Sparrows, Ferruginous Hawk, Greater Sage Grouse, and Loggerhead Shrike.

KAS has limited its testimony to birds, bats, and habitat, but information is available on wind industrial projects regarding sporadic production of power, efficiency rate of projects, economic costs, and substantial subsidies required for construction of projects. Visual impact on sweeping landscapes is an additional effect from towers.

With climate change clean energy solutions need to be found. I do not know the answer, but just possibly it is on a much smaller and personal scale. If we destroy natural habitat, birds, bats and other species in erecting questionable "green energy" projects, what will we save?

*President, Gloria Baldi*

*(Editor's note: See related article on Page 6)*

**3rd Annual Members' Photo Show:**

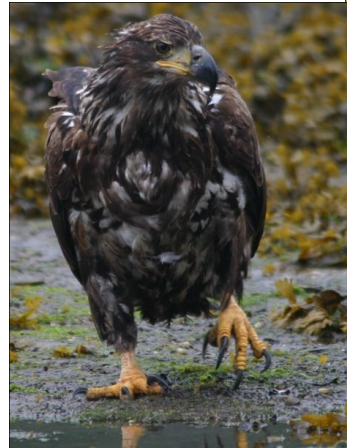
**Call for photos!!!**



The members' photo show has been such a great success that we have decided to do

it again! Here's a chance to show off your best and/or favorite photos of birds or bird-related images. They will be assembled in a PowerPoint presentation by Steve Moore. Those who wish to submit photos should 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 photos: **who, what, when, where, story?** You may submit as many as you like. When we see how many we have, we'll limit each person to a selected number of photos, so you may want to rate yours by number (if you submit 8 photos, and we choose only 4,

numbers 1-4 would be in the show) or you can let us choose. If you can be present at the meeting for the presentation, you



may speak about your photo or, if you're shy, we can read the description that you provide.

Send to: Steve Moore, 712 E 2nd Ave, Ellensburg, WA 98926 ~ [s.moore@kvalley.com](mailto:s.moore@kvalley.com)

This has become an annual event. This program will be presented in February, but you may begin sending photos at any time. The deadline will be about the 13th of February.

**THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

To **Becky and Tim Yoxtheimer** for the generous donation of Audubon prints, and to **Kay Forsythe** for the donation of a 1920's collectible bird book. As a result of their generosity these items, at the November *Silent Auction*, added **\$62.00** to the KAS bank account.

**IN MEMORY OF PEGGY SCHNEBLY**

Two memorials have been received totaling **\$55.00**.



*The editor wishes to thank everyone who submitted articles, reports, photos, commentary, ideas, even jokes and cartoons, for The Hooter in the past year! I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and hope to hear from you in the coming year, 2012!!*

**BirdKitt Postings!**

Get the latest news on bird sightings in Kittitas County from our very own regional "**BirdKitt**", an online "listserve" for all persons interested in bird sightings in Kittitas County. You can post your own sightings and sign on to have new postings sent directly to your email address.

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:birdkitt-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.

Editor's note: Because of space limitations in the Hooter, BirdKitt postings will no longer be printed, unless there is something very exciting or unusual. Sign up for yourself and find out what's hopping in your own county!

It is no secret that wind energy proponents and bird lovers have had some contention over the years. Poorly planned wind farms in the recent past have indeed been guilty of unacceptable numbers of bird deaths. Looking ahead, HawkWatch International is developing a tool that will help all of us work together to ensure wind and other renewable energy development is planned in a raptor friendly manner. First though, what exactly are the issues regarding wind and raptors?

### We need wind for energy – but so do raptors.

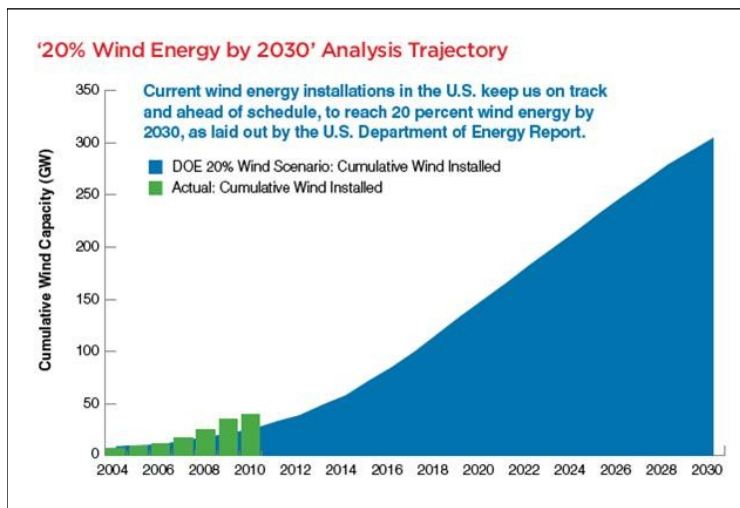
Oftentimes in the west, windy areas along mountain ridges are often valuable locations for wind energy development. These ridges are also used by raptors as their supplier of wind updrafts (known as “thermals”), creating a natural lift from below. Catching the lift with their outstretched wings allows them to conserve their energy along their migratory journeys. Ridges also act as directional arrows helping raptors get to where they want to go, acting kind of like their own GPS system.

This means that raptors and wind developments will often cross paths. And in a fight between a turbine and a raptor, the raptor will always lose.

### Wind energy is expanding quickly.

Today, the United States has about 40,000 wind turbines spread around our country and it is only

going to increase. The U.S. Department of Energy has set the goal of wind providing 20% of the nation’s energy needs by 2030. This will mean an installation of approximately 100,000 additional turbines!



The intersection between wind energy and raptors tops the priority list for a lot of us these days. As one of the few species groups with the potential to be negatively impacted at the population level by the growing number of turbines on our landscape, raptors have caught the eye of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a variety of bird conservation organizations. Golden Eagles especially

have taken center stage as long-term migration and nesting data such as HawkWatch International’s indicate declining Golden Eagle populations in the U.S. West.

### The Solution?

Don’t put the turbines where the raptors are.

Sure, but how do we *know* where they are? Using raptor migration data collected throughout the west, including those recorded at Chelan Ridge with the help of Kittitas Audubon and local

community members, HawkWatch International scientists are developing a West-wide mapping tool. How will this tool work? Simply put, by 2013 it will allow wind developers, the US Fish and Wildlife, Audubon chapters like Kittitas, and local communities to immediately determine if a particular mountain ridge (located anywhere in the west) will have a low, medium, or high presence of raptors. It will effectively streamline the process of location selection for wind energy developments and at the same time, better ensure the wellbeing of raptor populations and the habitats they rely upon.

To learn more about HawkWatch International’s efforts, please contact Emilie at 801-484-6808 x 103 or [eturner@hawkwatch.org](mailto:eturner@hawkwatch.org). Visit their website at [www.hawkwatch.org](http://www.hawkwatch.org)



HWI photo



Welcome New Members!

Thanks to renewing members:

*Jennifer Jacques*  
*Mary Ann Macinko*

**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](mailto:info@kittitasaudubon.org)  
*At the beginning of each month, we'll send you an email with a link to the new Hooter.*




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

**Your KAS membership dues working for a better environment!**

**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**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you like to receive The Hooter electronically?**

**May we print your name in The Hooter as a new, renewing, or donating member?**    Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_    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](http://Kittitasaudubon.org).**

For membership information contact Membership Chair, Tuck Forsythe ~ [forsythe@fairpoint.net](mailto:forsythe@fairpoint.net)

## Upcoming KAS Field Trips

**Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> ~ First Saturday Birdwalk**, Rinehart Park ~ Ducks are on the ponds (up to 5 species in December); eagles are arriving. Careful spotting will turn up kinglets and Brown Creepers finding winter refuge in our park. 8 AM at Rinehart parking lot; Jeb and Gloria Baldi lead.

**Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>, Sunday ~ Note rescheduled date ~ McNary NWR** ~ Full-day trip for Duck Heaven in December on Columbia riverside marshlands south of Tri-Cities, WA. (Subject to weather cancellation) Call Steve at 509-933-1179.

**Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> ~ Cle Elum Christmas Bird Count**, contact Michael Hobbs, [BirdMary-moor@frontier.com](mailto:BirdMary-moor@frontier.com) or see website <http://www.marymoor.org/CECBC/CleElumCBCCircle.htm>

**December 17<sup>th</sup> Saturday ~ Ellensburg's 33<sup>rd</sup> Christmas Bird Count.** Many of you know that, no matter what the weather, teams of people

cover a 15 mile diameter circle every year in December to count every species and group of birds they are able to find. At the end of the day everybody gathers to enjoy a potluck at the home of Steve and Linda Hall, and to tally results. After the Count Day, Phil Mattocks compiles the statistics for National Audubon, which he has done for many years. People who have covered a specific area in the past are verifying that they will be doing so again this year. **If you have never been involved and would like to join a group, please call Gloria Baldi at 933-1558 no later than December 10<sup>th</sup>.**

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



### **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*



*The Hooter - December 2011*

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