3rd Annual Members’ Slide Show Extravaganza compiled by Steve Moore

Membership Meeting - Thursday, February 16th

@ 7:00 PM ~ Hal Holmes Center

This program has been such a hit, we decided to continue the tradition. Not so very long ago, friends got together for slide shows, either for enthralling transparencies of last summer’s European vacation or for (—yawning—) family shows of the kids at the beach. What happened to that tradition? Lots of things: busier lives, problems with Kodachrome chemicals, cheap and colorful photopaper printing, and finally, the digital age – most everybody nowadays takes digital photos. And until the prices on digital projectors get real, getting together as a group is the best way to have a “slide show” (old names die hard). On cue are many birds, near and far, close-up, at feeders or on a faraway continent, a few animals, a few plants, and people enjoying all of the above, sometimes hiking in the woods, backpacking, or canoeing, but mostly behind the viewfinder. So please come join us for an evening of shared adventures!

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.

This program is jointly sponsored by the Ellensburg Public Library and Kittitas Audubon.

Send Your Photos Now!
Deadline is February 14th
Send to: Steve Moore, 712 E 2nd Ave, Ellensburg, WA 98926 ~ s.moore@kvalley.com

Future Programs (mark your calendar!)

March 15th – 50 years after the book Silent Spring, by Rachel Carson ~ Dr. Holly Pinkart (CWU Biology Dept)

April 19th – Sustainable Eco-Tourism in Peru ~ Lucy Bottcher (CWU Biology Dept)

May 17th – Our shrinking Shrub Steppe ~ Dr. Kim Marie Thorburn (Spokane Audubon)
President – Gloria Baldi 933-1558
Vice President – Bud Rechterman 962-4508
Secretary – Jim Briggs 933-2231
Treasurer – Vacant
Conservation – Janet Nelson 674-6165
Education – Vacant
Field Trips – Steve Moore 933-1558
*Newsletter – Jan Demorest 933-1179
*Historian – Vacant
Programs – Jeb Baldi
Publicity – Gerry Sorenson 968-4857
Wildlife Habitat – Joe Meuchel 933-3011
*Bluebird boxes – Jan Demorest 933-1179
Past President — Gloria Lindstrom 933-2550
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.

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 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.

You Can Help Save Critical Habitat!
Conservation issues are a subject that many of us would like to disregard as it is much more fun to search for birds. However, without efforts to save habitat that birds require to survive, we will have fewer and fewer birds to find in the future. Presently, about one-third of the 320 bird species in Washington State are in steep decline, for many reasons, but mainly because of destruction of habitat. We need to make continuous efforts to retain and/or enhance the natural habitat we have. If the only task you can take is to write a short letter or an email (even shorter), or make a quick phone call, you can know that you have done what you can to save an area.

An issue presently under attack in the Washington State legislature is the attempt to dismantle the Growth Management Act, which was formed in 1990 in response to “uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals expressing the public’s interest in the conservation and the wise use of our lands, posing a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state. It is in the public interest that citizens, communities, local governments, and the private sector cooperate and coordinate with one another in comprehensive land use planning.”

On January 18th House Bill 2282 was introduced and would eliminate the Growth Boards and take away the citizen participation in the GMA. This bill changes the face of smart growth in Washington. It eliminates the Boards, makes citizens go to Superior Court with a lawyer, and makes you PROVE you will have personal harm from County or City actions instead of just indicating that their comprehensive plan or development regulations are a bad idea.

The Growth Management Act is one of the most important laws we have to protect birds and the environment; it requires cities and counties to plan for growth and transportation (rather than just leave it a hodge-podge), and to ensure protection of critical areas and natural resources. If we Auduboners want to help out on a critical issue this session, this is it! A simple toll-free call to 800-562-6000 asking our representatives to please VOTE NO on HB 2282 is letting them know that numbers of individuals care about this issue. If we do not respond, the birds lose.

Gloria Baldi
First Saturday BirdWalk on January 7th!

A custom on the First Saturday BirdWalk of the New Year for the past three years is that we meet at 8:00 AM, go for a group breakfast at the Bar 14, and begin the walk at 9:00 AM. The birds are awake and we are warm and full. A mild morning in the mid 20s without snow saw 13 hearty souls, including two young children, searching for birds. It was slow birding until we reached the new Reecer Creek Flood Project (under 1-90 to Rotary Park) where, after a great deal of study on two little creatures feeding in the shallow creek water, we knew we had a new species for the BirdWalk. Photos by Steve Moore, and insight from both Phil Mattocks and Scott Downes, determined that the birds were Least Sandpipers. Back on the upper ponds where it was ice free, we used scopes to study a good variety of water fowl including a rare Redhead Duck. Around the lake and down the river trail, two sightings of the American Dipper were most enjoyable. A total of 21 species, including the ‘first-timer’, gives a great start for 2012. Over the years the species total, with a few new ones each year, has risen to 127. Terrific numbers for a much-used city park! Jeb

28 January~ Valley Raptor Tour ~ 8 of us made a 3 & 1/2 -hour morning loop of Kittitas valley to look at winter raptors. Weather was calm with interesting clouds - no wind or thermals, so most birds were perched. We tallied raptors to get a feel for proportions: 38 Red-tailed Hawks, 19 kestrels, 8 Bald Eagles, 3 Prairie Falcons (2 of which were diving at each other ~ maybe a pair beginning the bonding process. It was a beautiful show!), 1 Great Horned Owl, 1 N. Harrier, 1-only Rough-legged Hawk, and 1 retiring accipiter. No “uncommons” were seen at

35 mph, but the party spotted a snipe and Horned Larks on Hungry Jct Rd, feeder birds at our rest stop near Parke Creek Rd, a kingfisher and waterfowl (4 spp.) near canals, and plenty of blackbirds (2 spp.) near farms; 28 species total.

Photos by Zachary Bahmiller, Jan’s 11-yr-old nephew who joined us on this trip.

Upcoming Field Trips ~ see Page 8

Spring Field Trip Schedule - April to June, 2012

~ More details on Kittitas Audubon website ~

April
7th ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park.
14th ~ Saturday (plus Sunday option) ~ Nisqually Delta and NWR, Olympia.
21st ~ Saturday ~ Confluence Park, Wenatchee.
28th ~ Saturday ~ Columbia Basin Birds: Crab Creek, Othello, etc.

May
5th ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park
10th-13th ~ Thursday to Sunday ~ 4 days; Malheur Wetlands, Oregon.
19th ~ Saturday ~ Naneum and Colockum Forest and Stream.
26th ~ Saturday ~ Wenas Area Birding.

June
2nd ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park
9th ~ Saturday ~ Toppenish NWR and Old Fort Simcoe.
16th ~ Saturday ~ Robinson Canyon.
23rd ~ Saturday ~ Lake Wenatchee/Tall Timbers.
30th ~ Saturday ~ Vantage Hwy: Sage Steppe to Columbia River.
On Friday, January 20th, Jeb and I returned from an early morning appointment in Yakima. You remember the previous day was our first serious snow of the year with about ten inches, and filling the feeders was the first task at hand. But suddenly, a female Northern Harrier (brown) was hunting our weed field just beyond the fence. Plunging down and then out several times indicated there was either a rodent or a quail (most likely) deep in those weeds, but she was unsuccessful and as she landed on a rock to rest, a male Harrier (gray) circled over. Just beautiful birds, although he did not remain long. So out to feed, but who flew in to sit on the rail fence but a Red-tailed Hawk. We’ve never had one in such close proximity as it usually perches in the tall aspens away from the house, and we have observed it several times successfully swooping for a delicious vole. We could only surmise that it was after any rodent that may come from under the snow to the bird seed beneath the feeders. Not daring to venture outside as it perched, we watched—and took pictures. But as a second Red-tail glided over the house, it caused our resident to fly to its aspen. Now - out to feed, but ‘bam’, a bird hit the window. We were disheartened to see a wee Black-capped Chickadee on the deck, but soon discovered the reason - a male American Kestrel perched in a juniper just outside our opposite window. The chickadee recovered and flew, as the kestrel kept other small birds from feasting. Again the camera was used as we did not want to scare off the kestrel. He remained for twenty minutes, or more, before he flew - and finally the feeders could be filled. The entire “raptor show” took more than an hour and a half, but it was a show we will not forget.

Although she did not appear this day, a mature Cooper’s Hawk comes almost daily to ‘hunt our feeders’. She (determined only by size) has been rather successful as twice we have seen her suddenly ‘fly the feeders’ to frighten the quail, which hit the side of the house or a window and succumbed or were stunned. It takes about twenty minutes for her to feel secure enough to come close to the house and snatch the bird, taking it elsewhere for dining. An immature Sharp-shinned Hawk performs the same action but comes more intermittently. Of course, his meal is a smaller bird - once a House Sparrow. We have observed this hunting behavior many times in different places, enforcing our belief in the intelligence of birds.

Note: Last year we moved from our place above Wilson Creek’s riparian zone, to property out of town with open fields. Expecting much less bird activity, we have been pleasantly surprised to not find that so. True, we do not have the mini-migration of warblers and kinglets, or the other small birds that require more dense foliage; we just have different bird experiences. The raptors have been the greatest joy, but the Turkey Vultures ‘kettling’ to migrate, or the Common Nighthawks hawking bugs over the ‘weed field’, along with flyovers of flocks of geese and ducks, have shown us that anywhere in the Kittitas Valley may be a perfect place to watch birds.

Gloria Baldi, with photos by Jeb Baldi

Editor’s Note: Thanks to Gloria for submitting this story. We’d love to hear your stories of sightings or encounters with birds. Please consider sharing a story.
Hi Guys, As window strikes are such a big issue and the biggest single cause of bird fatalities I thought I’d upload a photo I took at a lodge in Ecuador showing a mobile they use to stop birds flying in to plate glass.

You can see from this picture that the glass is reflecting the forest in front of the lodge and that without something like this birds are going to be flying straight in to the glass.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VARCWorkshops/photos/album/2133980347/pic/1924633223/view?picmode=&mode=tn&order=ordinal&start=1&count=20&dir=asc

The thing I really liked about these is that they’re really simple to make, cost virtually nothing and are natural and esthetic.

Please forward this to family and friends and encourage them to make and use one if they have problems with birds flying into windows.

Cheers, Derek (VARC: Vancouver Avian Research Centre)

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Window Mobile acts as a deterrent for bird window strikes?

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The 14th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

From February 17th ~ 20th, 2012 (that’s Presidents’ Day Weekend) take part in a family-friendly educational activity that is lots of fun, helps the birds, and is free!

Each year, tens of thousands of people throughout the U.S. and Canada take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). You can count birds wherever you are, including: in your backyard, off your balcony, at your local park, or at a nature center (or the beach or the mountains or the desert or….wherever you happen to be).

People of all ages and levels of bird-watching experience are welcome. The GBBC is a great way to learn more about the birds in your community and connect with nature.

You can count by yourself, or with your family, community group, school, or friends! It’s an ideal way for more experienced birders to introduce children, grandchildren, and others to the wonderful world of birds.

Anyone can explore which species have been seen in their community, state, or province using maps and charts on the GBBC website. Make the birds in your neighborhood count! Join in this year’s Great Backyard Bird Count.

Visit www.birdcount.org to learn how to participate, enter your data, explore results online, enter a photo contest, even win prizes!!!
We were down on the Washington coast for Thanksgiving, and made it out to the beach at Ocean Shores.

We spotted this Common Murre about the high tide line, among all the debris. It was tired enough that for the first 5 minutes we watched it, the only sign of life was the occasional blink of an eye. We put up the stake, and several pieces of driftwood around it to protect it from cars. As we were getting ready to leave, it stood, stretched its wings, and then settled back down to rest again. Our granddaughter Ashley Sorenson took the picture.

Gerry Sorenson

Nesting Bald Eagles at “Getty’s Cove”

*For those of you who are familiar with the Vantage area:*

From Grant County PUD: “The Cove Recreation Area, formerly called Getty’s Cove, will be open to the public in April of this year. Between now and April we will be working on upgrades to the site to get it ready for public use. Additionally we have nesting Bald Eagles at the site and they are entering a critical nesting period so we will not be allowing public access to the site until April. Once the site is open, the public will be allowed to view the eagles from a reasonable distance.”

*Birdkitt posting by Scott Downes*

Unusual Merlin Band Recovery

*~ from the winter bulletin of the Falcon Research Group by Bud Anderson*

Jack Betteworth reports that an adult female Merlin he banded at its nest in NW Seattle in 2010 has been recovered after hitting a wire in downtown Yakima on 11th of December 2011. This is the first known record of a breeder leaving Seattle, flying east across the Cascade Mountain range, and winding up in eastern Washington. It is surprising that a local Merlin would leave the food-rich resources of a major city and essentially fly SE. As always, we keep learning.

*Note:* If you would like to support the work of the Falcon Research Group which works tirelessly to collect raptor data, dues are $25.00 mailed to Box 248, Bow, WA 98232. Check their website for more information on their work.

Thanks to renewing members:

Bette & Clarence Grening
Cricket & Kurt Johnson
Jo Ellen Richards
Karen & Keith Johnson
Dr. Raymond D. Perkins & Janet L. Fulton-Perkins, Joe Meuchel

Welcome new members:

Brian Carlson
**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.

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**Membership & Misc.**

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. Reply to the first email about Bird-kitt that you receive from “yahoogroups”. To unsubscribe: send email to birdkitt- unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com. If you have difficulty, contact Chris Caviezel chris.caviezel@gmail.com

This is a great resource for finding places to look for birds in the valley.

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**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?

May we print your name in The Hooter as a new, renewing, or donating member? Yes ____ No ____

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@fairpoint.net
Upcoming KAS Field Trips

**February**

4th ~ Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park. Hoping to find the winter residents - ducks, grebes, hawks and forest birds, plus any surprises, that we missed in January. 2-3 hour walk; Tom Gauron leads, 968-3175.

18th ~ Saturday ~ Upper County Feeder Tour. The places where birds congregate in winter: feeders with food and shelter. A look at seed and suet eaters in yards with popular feeding stations. In winter a bigger challenge is finding open water. A lot of what we see and where we see will depend on that. A search for swans and waterfowl at nearby ponds may be in order, and some other forest birds will complete the list. Plan to bring a lunch. Limit of 12 people. Cricket Webb will lead; please call 509-674-4035.

**March**

3rd ~ Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park. Early migrants are moving, and some waterfowl are still hanging on. Past years have seen Varied Thrush, killdeer, Brown Creeper, and even a Violet-Green Swallow! 2-3 hr walk; Jeb and Gloria Baldi lead: 933-1558

17th ~ Saturday ~ Sandhill Cranes, Othello and environs. Cranes tarry awhile on their yearly migration through our state, thanks to farmers who put out corn for them; plus waterfowl are still on central Washington ponds. (Details to be announced)

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**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!

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Kittitas Audubon
P.O. Box 1443
Ellensburg WA 98926

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Don't forget Valentine’s Day!

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The Hooter - February 2011

The Newsletter of Kittitas Audubon - [http://www.kittitasaudubon.org](http://www.kittitasaudubon.org)