Mid-winter feels like a good time to review sunny times of past years. Our audience wants to see it all – vacations, people, birds, and whatever else you would like to share. Generally members have been asked to submit 2 to 20 photos to share with our group. We have a few submittals as of the last week of January but are hoping for many more in the next weeks.

Please submit your pictures by Monday, February 18, because the show is coming right up on the 21st!!

This year there’s a new twist: in addition to more recent digital photos, you are encouraged to look over your OLD photos and submit a few pictures from when the world was younger – say from 15-20 years ago (or more!).

These can be slides or paper photos and the wherewithal exists to turn them into digital images.

But send them in NOW – c/o Steve Moore, 712 E 2nd Ave, Ellensburg, WA 98926.

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 18th!!!
**KAS BOARD MEMBERS**

President – Jim Briggs 933-2231
Vice President – Bud Rechterman 962-4508
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*Christmas Bird Count – Phil Mattocks 962-2191
*Librarian – Ginger Jensen 925-5816
Social/Greeter – Kay Forsythe 925-2356

*NON-VOTING 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.

After 15 years of success in North America, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will open up to the entire world for the first time in 2013. Anyone, from anywhere on earth, can participate by visiting [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) and reporting the kinds and numbers of birds they see during the 16th annual count, **February 15 –18, 2013**.

A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with partner Bird Studies Canada, the four-day count receives sightings from tens of thousands of people reporting more than 600 bird species in the United States and Canada alone.

“This year’s count will give us a whole new perspective as sightings pour in from around the globe,” said Marshall Iliff at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. “Millions of people encounter birds every day all over the world. Imagine what scientists will learn if each one of us shares observations from our own area!”

Participating is easy. Simply watch birds for at least 15 minutes at the location of your choice on one or more of the count days. Estimate the number of birds you see for each species you can identify. You’ll select your location on a map, answer a few questions, enter your tallies, and then submit your data to share your sightings with others around the world.

The global capacity for the count will be powered by eBird, an online checklist program for all of the world’s 10,240 bird species. Participants will be able to view what others are seeing on interactive maps, keep their own records, and have their tallies recorded for perpetuity.

This is a great opportunity for all ages, young and old and in-between, to get out and discover birds in your own backyard!

For details: [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)
First Saturday BirdWalk

On January 5th, ten people ‘birded’ from 9:00 AM to noon in 27-30 degree weather with ten inches of snow on the ground, under an overcast sky. Yes, we did start the New Year’s 2013 BirdWalk at 9:00 AM following a tradition suggested by Marilyn Sorenson a few years back to start the new year by meeting at 8:00 AM, going for a group breakfast, and when filled with good food, start the Walk an hour later when the birds are on the move. The strategy worked well on this morning as we tallied 27 species. No new species, but a Great Horned Owl peered at us as we watched it from a distance of 30 feet. And with open water on about half of the upper pond, we had a good waterfowl selection: Hooded Merganser, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Wigeon, Mallard. The rest of our usual suspects were: Am. Kestrel, Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Black-capped Chickadee, Downy Woodpecker, Raven, Dark-eyed Junco, Belted Kingfisher, Song Sparrow, American Dipper, Black-billed Magpie, American Robin, Killdeer, Varied Thrush, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Steller’s Jay, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and three swans flying up the Yakima River before we could get a good look to determine which species. A grand finale to a great morning!

Please join in the fun and help search for birds on February 2nd at 8:00 AM at the Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park bridge parking lot when Steve Moore and Jan Demorest will be leaders.

Waterville Plateau and Okanogan Highlands, January 19-20. Interesting weather for a driving cruise through snowy landscape: we were under gray freezing fog in the Columbia Valley, but drove up through it each day into bright sunshine on the highland areas. Driving routes were Moses Coulee – Waterville – Mansfield – Bridgeport – Brewster on Saturday, and Tonasket – Havillah – Chesaw - Molson – Oroville on Sunday. Fogbanks on Saturday kept us from finding the Snowy Owls near Mansfield, which Phil Mattocks found on a separate trip on Sunday! Redtails, Bald Eagles and Kestrels in large numbers were perching down below the fog, especially along the river. On the sunny plateau, raptors were fewer but we tallied 7 Rough-legged Hawks. Flocks of Horned Larks and Snow Buntings were scattered but we got poor views as they quickly flew off the road and away. One flock of mostly buntings near Mansfield had several hundred birds. Highlights on the way down from the plateau were Bohemian Waxwings in Foster Creek, Chukars, and a quick look (maybe) at a Merlin. Along the Columbia we counted 13 waterfowl species, many of which were visible from our motel room in Pateros, where we scoped Canvasback and Redhead among many Ring-necked Ducks and Common Goldeneye.

Our sunny drive through the Okanogan didn’t turn up many birds, but the sights made the trip memorable: Common Redpolls with chickadees and goldfinches at a feeder, a Northern Shrike on a fir tip, a whitetail deer trotting off, a Downy Woodpecker on a mullein stalk next to the road, and a soaring immature Golden Eagle ~ all bathed in lovely sunshine! 47 species.

~ Steve Moore

Thanks to Renewing Members!

Susan Bangs
Robin Knox
Winter is a great time for watching birds—in many parts of North America the trees are free of leaves and a scarcity of natural food makes them more likely to visit feeders. It’s easy to entice new visitors to your yard in winter by offering food and shelter. Try any of these tips to help birds stay warm and to draw them into your yard this winter:

♦ Provide high-energy foods such as suet, peanut butter, and black oil sunflower seed. These foods are all high in fat and are packed with calories to help birds keep warm.

♦ Provide a heated birdbath. In some parts of the world it may be difficult for birds to find sources of unfrozen water. Offering them a mildly heated birdbath will help them stay clean and free of parasites. This is also a great way to attract birds that do not usually come to feeders.

♦ Leave nest boxes out throughout the winter, or consider buying or building a roost box. Either of these will help to shelter birds from cold, wind, rain, and snow. Nest and roost boxes can also offer protection from predators.

♦ Native plants provide many benefits to birds in the form of food, shelter, and nesting habitat. Many native plants will provide fruit and seeds throughout the winter. Native plants also attract native insects, an important source of food for many species of birds. Look for seed or fruit-bearing plants native to your area at nurseries and native plant sales.

Read more about how to make your yard a healthier and more attractive place for birds.

Visit the National Audubon website:  http://www.audubon.org/

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Bird Houses for Spring!!!

These beautiful birdhouses, made by a local older gentleman, were donated by his son after his father passed away. They have been upgraded with entry guards so that the holes are now too small for Starlings and House Sparrows. We are offering them for a donation of $5 or $10 dollars (or more!) and free to new joining members! So get your “cute” birdhouses while the supply lasts! They make great gifts! Call Jan or Steve at 509-933-1179.

WANTED: KAS STILL IN NEED OF SOMEONE TO HELP US GIVE AWAY MONEY!

Kittitas Audubon has substantial funds that the KAS Board would like to offer as educational scholarships, or possibly camp fees for students to attend camps with a focus on nature awareness. BUT..............we need a LEADER for the project. This person would lead a small committee to develop criteria, research opportunities, meet with teachers or instructors to discover recipients, as well as any other associated tasks. Attending Board meetings is not necessary, but reporting to the Board on occasion would be required. Are you that person???? Please help us!

Contact any board member if you are interested!
"Hi all,

While Marilyn and I were out prospecting for birds this afternoon in Badger Pocket, we came within 20 yards of a Red-tailed Hawk that had ID tags on both wings. They were large, probably an inch and a 1/2 square, red, and had “7P” printed (we only saw the print on the left tag) on it. Does anyone have any idea, who would have tagged it, and who we could report the location to?

Gerry Sorenson

"Hi all,

In response to my question on where to report banded birds, Gloria B. suggested Washington Ornithological Society web site. I started there, which led me to the national banding reporting site, which finally accepted my info. I got a notice of receipt, and am advised that it will be about 4 weeks before I get the results. Will keep you posted.

Gerry Sorenson

After Gerry’s discovery of the tagged Red-tailed Hawk in Kittitas Valley, the Falcon Research Group’s (FRG) newsletter arrived with the following information about wing-tags.

Twelve years ago in 2001, FRG began attaching yellow wing-tags to adult Red-tailed Hawks at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Their goals were to learn more about the number and distribution of resident Red-tails at the airport and to help reduce bird strikes involving hawks and aircraft.

One of these adult Red-tails (Yellow Left C) is still there after 12 years. He has gone through at least three different females during this time and avoided literally millions of aircraft landings and takeoffs, indicating the hawks can learn to avoid jets.

FRG has found that, with luck, the same pairs of adult Red-tails remain at the airport year round and stay mated for life. However, mortality can and does change all of that. Six Sea-Tac hawks died from car collisions, one was caught in wire fencing, one in bird netting, one of apparent old age, while two died die of collisions with aircraft. Three others were shot at other airports.

Because Red-tails are among the most vulnerable hawk species around aircraft, FRG has attempted to capture and re-locate all juvenile Red-tails that arrive at Sea-Tac. The birds are taken to Skagit County, 75 miles north of Sea-Tac, by the donated services of Bellaire Charters.

In 2010, FRG decided that they needed to know what happened to these juveniles after release, so the birds have been marked with light blue wing tags, (left wings for presumed males and right for females). To date 156 Sea-Tac Red-tails have been tagged, 38 yellow and 118 blues.

At Sea-Tac, only 6 birds (5%) of the 118 juveniles have returned to the airport. Among these, four (3%) were observed on a single day only. Another hawk stayed for three weeks before leaving and the sixth was struck by a plane.

FRG has received reports from tagged birds in California (1), Oregon (6), and British Columbia (3), but most appear to remain in Washington. The southernmost record was near Maxwell, California (north of Sacramento), and the farthest north is Vancouver, B.C. To the knowledge of FRG, all have remained in the Pacific flyway.

The success of this project has motivated both Portland International (PDX) and Vancouver International (YVR) to also begin tagging their Red-tails, so efforts are being coordinated regionally and internationally. PDX is using orange wing tags, while YVR is using white wing tags.

Therefore, if you spot a wing-tagged Red-tailed Hawk, as Gerry did, please let FRG know when, where, what color, which wing and what number, if you are able. It will add to the data to help determine where the birds go after relocation.

Kittitas Audubon, as well as several individual members, donates to Falcon Research Group to support the collection of data regarding hawks in the northwest. If you wish to help, money can be sent to:

Falcon Research Group, Box 248, Bow, WA 98232

Falconresearch@gmail.com (360) 757-1911

~ submitted by Gloria Baldi
Can we de-ice our roads without hurting wildlife?

from WDFW’s Crossing Paths News Notes:

When Washington winter conditions include ice on our roads, driveways and sidewalks, de-icer applications become a safety necessity. But can we have safe human travel corridors without hurting wildlife attracted to salt and grit?

Wildlife biologists say the answer is "maybe" and it depends on what's used where.

De-icers used by federal, state, and local government road crews, as well as by private citizens at home and work, are mostly one of three types: 1) salt based (usually sodium chloride or common table salt, but also magnesium chloride, potassium chloride, and calcium chloride), 2) acetate based, or 3) sand.

Salt based de-icer has been used for over a century in North America and remains the most commonly used because it is relatively inexpensive, available, and effective.

Large mammals, such as moose, elk, deer, bighorn sheep and mountain goats, are attracted to road salt, which sometimes becomes a factor in motor vehicle collisions with these big animals.

Less familiar is the attraction to salt by some birds.

"Winter" or Cardueline finches, of the Fringillidae family, including siskins, crossbills, grosbeaks, finches, goldfinches and redpolls, are seed-eaters that move south in winter when seed is scarce in their more northern breeding areas. They are known to love salt, with research showing they prefer sodium over other minerals, regardless of size. Salt is used by birds not only to fill a need associated with a vegetarian diet, but also as grit to aid in the grinding of food in their crops.

But research shows that birds ingesting relatively small numbers of road salt granules or small quantities of sodium chloride solutions, are at risk of sodium poisoning.

Normally the salt glands of birds excrete sodium and chloride to maintain proper chemical balance. But those glands can be compromised by lack of access to fresh, open water or exposure to certain pesticides or oil, and birds die of salt "poisoning" or toxicosis.

Cold weather that freezes areas of freshwater may force birds to use more saline waters that remain open because of the high salt content, including melted snow on roadways. Using salt water to dilute salt ingestion only makes the problem worse.

If birds aren't killed by the road salt itself, they are killed when motor vehicles collide with them on those roads. In fact, some research indicates salt ingestion increases the vulnerability of birds to vehicle collisions by causing impairment - they are too weak or slow to avoid moving vehicles.

WDFW biologist Ella Rowan, who monitors WDFW's Wildlife Health hotline, says a call or two every year comes in about whole flocks of dead birds in a road, usually winter finches and perhaps where they were ingesting salt-based de-icer.

So what about the other de-icer types?

Acetate-based de-icers include Calcium Magnesium Acetate (CMA), Potassium Acetate, and Sodium Acetate. Research indicates CMA and potassium acetate do not attract animals and are harmless to them if ingested. Sodium acetate, however, may attract animals and contribute to roadkills.

Sand, of course, is natural, usually composed of crushed aggregate or pure river sand. It has been used to increase road or foot traffic traction at least as long as salt, but it obviously doesn't have the actual "de-icing" effect of salt. Sand has no negative impact on wildlife, but in the amounts needed to keep roadways safe, it is more expensive.

Washington Department of Transportation (WDOT) wildlife biologist Kelly McAllister says applying affordable de-icers on our state's roads is vital to the safety of winter travelers and we need to look for solutions that don't compromise safety. Acetate-based de-icers are very expensive - usually in the range of four to five times as expensive as salt-based - they aren't as effective, and they have high oxygen demand when they run off into road-adjacent waterways, he says.

"Providing salt sources for wildlife away from roads is something that is being tried," McAllister said. "I think making open water more available to birds that are ingesting salt, to reduce the effects of toxicosis, is another part of the solution, but it's obviously difficult to do on a large scale during freezing weather. We're open to ideas and citizen help."

WDFW biologists recommend that wildlife enthusiasts start at home. Use sand or acetate-based de-icers on sidewalks and driveways, or if you must use salt, use it very sparingly and keep it stored out of reach of wildlife. Maintain open water for birds during the winter, either by replenishing water at least daily or by using a safe bird bath heater element; keep bird baths clean to avoid spreading disease. Provide grit (sand or crushed egg shells) in a feeder to reduce the need for birds to go to roadsides.
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?

May we print your name in The Hooter as a new, renewing, or donating member? Yes ___ No ___ Would you be interested in occasional email notices regarding Audubon-related news? Yes ___ No ___

Excitement in the birding community around Vancouver, BC reached fever-pitch in late January when this little beauty was sighted for several days in Queens Park, with many postings on the local bird blog website and a number of very nice photos. This is an area that gets regular visits from Eurasian migrants, and it’s not far away. Take a 3-day mini-vacation in Canada and see cool winter birds!

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
2nd, Saturday ~ First Saturday Bird Walk, Irene Rinehart Park. Meet 8 AM at Rinehart parking lot at the river’s edge. Last year, Tundra Swans, Least Sandpipers and Dippers were found sheltering in our neighborhood park. Mid-winter dishes up surprises in exchange for nippy nose and fingers. Jeb and Gloria Baldi lead; 933-1558 for info.

9th, Saturday ~ Ducks and Eagles. An east county tour to view the farmland eagles and find as-many-as-we-can waterfowl in Columbia River waters. Itinerary: Fairview – old Vantage Highway – Ginkgo – Wanapum Dam. Lunch at Blustery’s in Vantage. Please contact Steve and Jan, 933-1179 for details.

MARCH
2nd, Saturday ~ First Saturday Bird Walk, Irene Rinehart Park. Meet 8 AM at Rinehart parking lot at the river’s edge. Last weeks of winter - not too late to find wigeon or a Hooded Merganser on the pond. Jeb and Gloria Baldi lead; 933-1558 for info.

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 - February 2013
The Newsletter of Kittitas Audubon - http://www.kittitasaudubon.org