Dr. David James will give a presentation that explores behind-the-scenes researching and writing the book, *Life Histories of Cascadia Butterflies*, highlighting the lives of notable butterflies of the eastern Cascades and sage steppe in central Washington. He will discuss current butterfly research and conservation endeavors with the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy in Yakima, the Washington wine grape industry, and the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla.

He developed a passion for entomology at the age of 8 in England while rearing caterpillars in his bedroom. He studied Zoology at the University of Salford near Manchester, then migrated to Australia to work for the New South Wales Department of Agriculture on ways of controlling agricultural pests like locusts and mites. A PhD study on the winter biology of Monarch butterflies in Sydney followed, and a career as a biocontrol scientist in horticulture blossomed. David developed successful conservation biological control systems for stink bugs in citrus and for mites in pasture, grapes and peaches. In 1999 he became an Associate Professor at Washington State University at Prosser and worked on biological control of insect and mite pests of hops and grapes. David has published numerous scientific papers. Copies of his book will be for sale at the meeting.

All Audubon meetings, held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Hal Holmes Center next to the Library, 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. Many thanks to the Ellensburg Public Library for sponsoring our meetings here!
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*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.

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**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

As I prepare this report, news is breaking everywhere. So I can’t vouch for the accuracy if things change. But what excitement! First, we have a possible Conservation Chair. We have invited him to the board meeting to see if he is up to the challenge. Check this space next month to see how we made out. Or, better yet come to the program meeting on the 16th for a live report.

Also, our swift watchers—Jan Demorest, Steve Moore, and Janet Nelson—have been watching the site of the old hospital chimney to see what the Vaux’s Swifts are doing and it looks like they may have found another chimney nearby. (See update on page 6) Oh, yes, and we have a great May program on butterflies. May 16th.

I attended the Eastern Washington Regional Audubon Chapter Meeting last Saturday at the Toppenish Wildlife Refuge. The big item was the unveiling of a comprehensive shrub-steppe initiative, spearheaded by Christie Norman, who very capably led the WA birding trail map effort. She would like Eastern Washington Chapters to determine what they can offer. The big focus will be Greater Sage Grouse and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Since the only sage grouse in our county are in an access-restricted federal area, they would like us to carefully monitor other obligate shrub-steppe species: Sage Thrasher, Brewer’s Sparrow, Sage Sparrow, and Loggerhead Shrike.

They asked the various chapters to report on successes and failures. I told them about the swift chimney (without the breaking news) and our concerns with the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Management Plan and our continuing problems with the windfarms. On the positive side, I described our marvelous bluebird trails, our perch poles, and nestboxes for barn owls and kestrels.

Denny Grandstrand from Yakima Audubon reported that they saved Wenas Creek from a bulldozer and stopped a golf course from encroaching on riparian habitat.

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon reported that the Hanford Reservation is doing well under management by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They are also considering more outreach to the Hispanic population, because of their linkages to the places where our migratory birds go. They are also doing urban bird banding to stimulate interest in birds.

The Palouse Chapter, located primarily in Idaho and consequently in the Central Flyway, is petitioning to be reassigned to the Pacific Flyway.

Spring is an exciting time of year for bird people. Take full advantage of our field trips (see Page 3 for field trip reports and Page 8 for upcoming trips).

Jim Briggs, President KAS
First Saturday BirdWalk on April 6th, 2013 ~
Instead of the forecast ‘blowing and rain’, it was a comfortable day with mild temperatures from 45 to 50 degrees......and no wind.......at least until we had finished. Joining the walk were two people from Seattle Audubon plus a birder from Elk Heights bringing the number to 18, including two young people aged 13 and 3.

An impressive aerial display by an Osprey with a new stick to add to its nest on the perch pole located just west of the lower river bridge started the morning, followed by a pair of Wood Ducks in the area of a nest box we placed a few years back. (Will they take it?) Lots of Tree Swallows, along with one Barn Swallow seen by sharp-eyed Norm. A Turkey Vulture moved on unseen currents, no flapping, just slightly swerving its wings moving across the sky. Our resident Red-tailed Hawk is back for the third year, peering over the edge of the nest ~ a reminder of last year when we saw the two fledglings leave the nest, the wind making it a bit rocky, but they held on tight to their swaying branch.

We counted thirty species, easily spotted as the leaves were just budding out and many migrants were returning from their winter stay in warmer country. Join us on May 4th! ~ Jeb Baldi

Grays Harbor and Ocean Shores, April 20-22.
Four KAS birders travelled to the coast for the shorebird spring migration, which swells to a peak in late April. From our base in Aberdeen, we visited Ocean Shores on Sunday and the margins of Grays Harbor on Monday. On the way over we explored riparian areas and farms near Elma along the Chehalis River - Wenzel Slough and Brady Loop - where we plumped our bird list with 30 species. Great birds! – Black-bellied Plovers, Dunlins, Greater Yellowlegs, and a Bonaparte’s Gull in the fields, and Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Shoveler, Pintail, and Greater White-fronted Goose in the ponds, plus a Bald Eagle nest.

For our coast days, we had morning high tides, best for good viewing. First stop, Ocean City State Park, a mix of ponds, forest, marsh and beach, where we enticed Marsh and Bewick’s Wrens from hiding, then headed off to Bill’s Spit to catch the incoming tide. Public viewing here is tricky, since a lot described as allowing access now has a new house on it. We set up the scope near a for-sale sign and peeked through trees for views of Caspian Terns, Marbled Godwits, Dunlins, and plovers massed along the narrow shore. When they flushed, a Peregrine cruised the shore, and we caught it in the scope as it perched on a snag. A Chestnut-backed Chickadee scolded us for trespassing.

On the Ocean Shores peninsula, we visited the beaches of Damon Point, the Brown Point Jetty and the golf course, adding Common Loon and Red-breasted Merganser. The best shorebirding of the trip was thanks to a tip from some other birders. We hurried back to Ocean City State Park on reports of beach-feeding flocks, and were treated to hundreds of birds pulling worms out of the sand. Among the godwits, dunlins and Black-bellies, we found smaller numbers of Semi-palmated Plover, Western Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher and Sanderling, and Surf Scoters in the waves. In the beach grass, Savannah Sparrows displayed their scratchy songs with a long trill in the middle. Bowerman Basin, near Hoquiam, is where we expected to see big flocks, but the Sunday morning high tide didn’t succeed in pushing the birds off their sand island in the middle of the harbor. With the scope we could barely make out the sandy-colored godwits and flocks of smaller birds – sandpipers and dunlins - but had to be content with close-ish views of Semi-palmated Plovers and Red-breasted Merganser. A Merlin did a fly-by over our empty mudflats. The sewage pond had many duck species and we found Cliff Swallows at the airstrip, where we had a great lunch at Lana’s Fly Cafe. At Bottle Beach, which has been improved recently with a parking lot and boardwalk, giving access to a viewing blind, we added a Common Yellowthroat, skulking in the willows, for a total of 64 species. And NO RAIN!!!

~ Steve Moore

DIVERSITY ROCKS! Columbia River trip 4-27-13 ~ On our way home from a very long, very productive day birding both sides of the Columbia River we remarked that having found 74 species could be attributed to the widely varied habitats we covered.

The main focus of the trip of course was for birds of the Columbia Basin wetlands. Ducks, ducks and

(Continued on page 5)
“I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.”

~ John Burroughs 1837-1921

John Burroughs was one of the first naturalists who focused on communicating his love of nature through the written word. You might think you haven’t heard of Burroughs, but you’ve probably heard of some of the things he said.

Visit this website: http://www.catskillarchive.com/jb/

**Birding Southern Arizona in March**

Marilyn and I spent about 2 weeks in mid-March chasing birds in southern Arizona. We started in New River (a small town North of Phoenix), then down to Sierra Vista, Ramsey Canyon, The San Pedro House, and the riparian area. Next, Lake Patagonia State Park, and Paton’s, a privately owned feeding station and hummingbird hangout in the town of Patagonia, then east on I-10 to Wilcox and up into the Chiricahua Mountains for some beautiful scenery.

The birds we saw were mostly near the northern limit of their range: Curved-bill Thrashers, White-winged Doves, Gambel’s Quail, Cactus Wrens, Gila Woodpeckers, Abert’s Towhees, Canyon Towhees, a Roadrunner, Cardinals, Phainopeplas, Inca Doves, Bridled Titmouse, Painted Redstart, Summer Tanagers, Lesser Goldfinches, and Vermilion Flycatchers, a Green-tailed Towhee, and a Scott’s Oriole.

The hummingbirds were just starting to arrive, but we saw Costa’s, Black-chinned, Violet-crowned, and Broad-billed. We looked for the elusive Elegant Trogan in each area, but after much reading of fine print, determined that it usually didn’t arrive until late April or even into May.

At Lake Patagonia State Park and Paton’s, there were four new birds for us: Gray Vireo, Cordillerean Flycatcher, Acorn Woodpecker, and Mexican Jay.

~ Gerry Sorenson

4-15-13 The Swainson’s was on the power pole on Old Vantage Hwy, north side, west of the old nest. It's a dark morph (and unfortunately it was a dark day and so is the photo) and yesterday I saw a second one with it! Didn’t have time to stop and take a photo. The immature and adult Cooper’s hawks were both in the yard. Handsome birds. The adult was chasing little birds around on the ground under the trees. It was like watching a cat, running underneath and then jumping into the tree and pouncing from branch to branch. The immature had a house sparrow and was very cooperative on the gate by our feeders. ~ Deb Essman on Brick Mill Road
Hello KAS folks,

I call Cle Elum home and miss it dearly, but I have been living in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, for a year, and will be here for another 6 months at least, on a ship modification project at the local shipyard.

This newly-created city forms a strip of concrete, glass, Disney and Vegas, wedged between barren sand, rock, and the Arabian Gulf. Just a bit of searching and a fortuitous newspaper article, and I found the Ras al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary, located at the tail end of Dubai Creek, which is actually a tidal estuary formed by a rift in the underlying bedrock.

A small, active, birding community has a website that posts sightings. Check out http://www.uaebirding.com/.

This corner of the Arabian Peninsula is an avian crossroads for migrations, wintering habitat for northern breeders, and breeding habitat for birds on their southern grounds. Wherever there is greenery, whether landscaped or natural, one will find a variety of birds. And even the 'barren' rocky slopes and dunes of sand can harbor abundant life ~ another reminder that our incredible natural world.

~ photos taken with my i-phone!:

- Mythical Fairy Terns courting in the Maldives. We missed the egg laying, when the one egg gets deposited in a tree crotch, or out on a branch with no support.
- Indian Roller - wet and miserable and too morose to flee due to an unusual rain. I still find it hard to believe that those colors exist in nature other than in minerals!
- Common Mynah, very common in fact. Raucous opportunists, and very entertaining vocalists.
- Green Bee-eater, another personal favorite because I'm a sucker for flashy colors. An extremely successful hunter, with a seemingly 100% hit rate, this little guy will fly out, catch an enormous insect, whack it on a hard surface to stun it or remove a stinger, swallow, and repeat.

(Continued from page 3) Field trip reports...

more ducks including Pintail, Shoveler, Redhead, Canvasback, all three teals, both scaups, Buffleheads and more. Shorebirds included American Avocet, Black-necked Stilts and Dunlins. No Great Egret, but we did see the usual Double-crested Cormorant. Caspian Terns have been missing for several years but we saw them in two places this time.

The road along Frenchman Hills yielded the usual farm country birds: both doves, pigeons, two hawks, assorted blackbirds, swallows and, of course, robins. Huntzinger Road gave us an Osprey on a nest and a Rock Wren. Getty's Cove has been bought by Grant County PUD and is now a campground called "The Cove". A State Discover Pass allows use on weekends during April, May, and September, and daily during the summer months. Along the river were a couple of Horned Grebes, a Common Loon, and a Pied-billed Grebe. Far away across the river were a few White Pelicans, almost too small to see! On the upland side and in the trees at Ginkgo we found Say's Phoebe, Yellow-rumped Warbler and the usual sparrows and finches.

Coming back on the Old Vantage highway the birds were struggling in the wind. Small birds sheltered in the sagebrush, but we followed a Sharp-shinned Hawk as he made a push, then rested before pushing on again. Mountain Bluebirds were around their houses. One mystery bird had us discussing it all day. While we were standing at the overlook at Ginkgo Interpretive Center a very large bird, mostly dark-colored, flew close to the cliffs below us. Some were convinced it was a falcon of some sort. It was a toss-up between Prairie and Gyrfalcon. Of course, the bird did not give us second look. Maybe next year...

~ Marianne Gordon
Well, we all knew this time would come, and now the Vaux’s Swifts have arrived and are searching for a new roost or roosts in which to spend the night on their journey from their wintering grounds in So. California, Mexico, and Central America, to their nesting areas in the Central & North Cascades and British Columbia. The Old Ellensburg Hospital is no more and the little birds will have to find a new refuge. Our Swift Spotters have watched as small flocks circled in vain over the now-empty lot, then disappeared in several directions in seeming confusion. Then, one evening this past week, they swirled around a smaller chimney of a private residence nearby, and after repeated “fly-bys”, eventually almost 200 dropped into the narrow opening. About a third popped back out after about 5 minutes, and most of these never returned. This would seem to indicate that this chimney is not ideally suited for roosting, at least not for the number of swifts that arrived, or the inside surface of the chimney does not provide enough roughened surface for clinging. This behavior was repeated the following evening, with a slightly smaller number of birds. Presumably, the others found alternate roosting places, either in smaller chimneys, on the trunks of large trees, or possibly the sheltered side of a house, garage, or shed (see photo at right).

Kittitas Audubon would like to ask that anyone who notices these tiny fast fliers in the evening sky at or just after sunset (you can also hear their tiny high chirping/chittering), please watch where they go if you can, count (estimate) the number you see, and call us with a report (933-1179 or any KAS board member), or email to: bobcat@kvalley.com.

You will find more information at the Vaux’s Happening website: www.vauxhappening.org.

This bird just waited in the tree while I walked into the house and came back with my camera. He was in a low branch. There are a couple of them now that seem to stay in the same tree at about the same place and one is down low in the branches. I’m not sure if it is a nest, but it seems likely.

The photo was taken with a Canon Powershot S2 IS on March 20, 2009 at 6:50 PM. I have other photos of these and other owls that live around my yard.

~ from Jim Cole, who lives on Airport Road near Joe Meuchel

Thanks to Renewing Member
Linda McFarlane ~ Snoqualmie Pass
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___ Join the local Kittitas Audubon Society (KAS) chapter $20
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Make check payable to KAS and mail to: KAS, P.O. Box 1443, Ellensburg, WA  98926

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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

Check out BirdKitt!!

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 BirdKitt that you receive from “yahoogroups”. To unsubscribe: send email to birdkitt-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com. If you have difficulty, contact Chris Caviezels chris.caviezels@gmail.com

This is a great resource for finding places to look for birds in the valley.
Upcoming KAS Field Trips

May

4th ~ Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park. Flocks of Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-crowned Sparrows are passing through; other arrivals are vireos, tanagers, and maybe Wood Ducks. 3-hr walk; Tom Gauron leader, Meet at bridge parking lot at 8 AM.

11th ~ Saturday ~ Observatory Road Bluebirds. Jeb & Gloria Baldi will show us Western Bluebirds nesting in 20 nestboxes placed along the road in 2010. The road branches off Umptanum Rd. at Ellensburg-Wenas Pass. This is favorable habitat for bluebirds – clusters of pines alternating with open sage meadow – and a beautiful spot in the spring with grass and flowers beginning to appear. Half-day trip; driving with short walks. 933-1558 for details.

25-27th ~ Saturday through Monday: Wenas Audubon Memorial Weekend Campout. Daily trips in the Wenas area by leaders from other Audubon chapters. This is the 50th anniversary of this Washington Audubon tradition. The campsite, in ponderosa-shaded meadow, is an hour’s drive from Ellensburg. Field trips in the area focus on bird ID, bats, native plants, and owls. A schedule of field trips and campfire programs will appear during the month at: http://www.wenasaudubon.org/

June

1st ~ Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park. Nesting season for waxwings, warblers, woodpeckers, pewees, orioles, swallows and cowbirds; a few migrants like Spotted Sandpiper are still coming (and going). 3-hr walk; Gloria & Jeb Baldi lead; 509-933-1558 for info. Meet at bridge parking lot at 8 AM.

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

Bluebirds are back!!!

Drawing by Louis Agassiz Fuertes; from “Bird Stories from Burroughs” 1911; 17th edition (see page 4 for John Burroughs quote