In 2008 Denny and his wife went to see the wintering Monarch butterflies in the mountains in eastern Michoacan, Mexico. Before 1975, lepidopterists knew all of the Monarchs in the Eastern United States migrated south, but no one knew where they went. Fred Urquhart, a Canadian zoologist, and his wife, Norah Roden Urquhart, started searching for that mysterious wintering ground in the 1960s. They developed a network of people interested in butterflies all over the eastern United States and soon had many people tagging monarchs. It wasn’t until 1975 that members of their team found where the Monarchs wintered. Of course, the Mexican people have known this for many generations. The Monarchs show up in Central Mexico close to November 1st, the Day of the Dead, when Mexicans celebrate the deaths of their ancestors.

The trip to the high forests where the Monarchs winter was an unforgettable experience. Come join us and experience for yourself one of the great migration spectacles on earth.

Denny Granstrand has been birding for over 35 years, with an interest in all creatures, especially the ones that fly. He pioneered the "Bird Alert" in the Outdoor section of the Yakima Herald Republic, writing that column for 2 1/2 years, and is a regular contributor of photographs to go with Andy Stepniewski’s "Wildlife Moment" that appears monthly in the Herald Republic’s Outdoor section.

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. Please 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!

An added treat at the May meeting will be a demonstration by a talented young birder, who will definitely surprise and delight you! Do not miss it!!
Election of Officers

Each May, Kittitas Audubon holds its election at the membership meeting. For the upcoming year, the following individuals have agreed to volunteer their time to our organization for the enhancement of birds.

President: Tom Gauron
Vice president: Judy Hallisey
Secretary: Jim Briggs
Treasurer: Sharon Lumsden

People can also be nominated from the floor, so if you would like to add a name to the roster for any position, please do not hesitate to do so.

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.

Yakima River Canyon eagles nesting ~ Mama sitting on eggs maybe?

~ Steve Moore  4/7/14

Thanks for renewing your membership!

Paula Hungar

The mission of Kittitas Audubon is to develop an appreciation of nature through education and conservation, with a focus on birds.
**April 5th ~ First Saturday ~** This beautiful spring morning brought out 19 birders who found 23 species as follows: American Robin, Black-billed Magpie, European Starling, Steller’s Jay, American Kestrel, Canada Geese, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Song Sparrow, Northern Flicker, Violet-green Swallows, Tree Swallow, Mourning Dove, Red-tailed Hawk, Dark-eyed Junco, Killdeer, American Wigeon, House Finch, Mallard, American Goldfinch, Common Merganser, Belted Kingfisher. ~ Tom & Diane

**April 26th ~ Columbia Basin Birds ~** Saturday, in spite of sunshine, was still chilly with snow around the edges. That didn’t deter eight eager birders from piling into the cars with all their gear, to head for what we hoped would be a warmer locale.

After many years of doing this loop we have a regular route, starting with the overlook at Ginkgo State Park visitor center. It was strange to see all the mud flats where we normally see ducks and grebes. We did manage a Yellow-rumped Warbler, Say’s Phoebe, Violet-green Swallows, and a kestrel.

Years ago in our explorations we came across a small pond near the Silica road exit that seems to be well-liked by a variety of birds: teal, Gadwall, Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds, and Great Blue Heron. We saw our first Black-necked Stilt of the day in this beautiful little wetland habitat.

The drive along Frenchman Hills Road goes through farmland with the usual farmland birds: magpies, swallows, hawks, pigeons, Mourning Doves, robins, and assorted blackbirds.

The water was higher than usual in the Frenchman Hills Wasteway ponds making it less desirable for birds, resulting in fewer than usual, but there were more stilts, a Marsh Wren (heard but not seen), Ring-necked Ducks, Cinnamon Teal, Coot, Killdeer, Canvasback, and wigeon.

After turning the corner onto Dodson Road, we spotted Great Egrets with a Caspian Tern at the Winchester Wasteway.

Then it was turn around, go over the hill and hit the road for Othello: more stilts, a couple of American Avocets, and pintail ducks. The little brown blobs proved to be Dunlin.

Amazing sights along the way: first, hundreds of California Gulls following a farmer on his plow; second, a flock of Sandhill Cranes flying overhead. It was late for them. We seldom have seen them in numbers this late in the spring.

Driving the Old Vantage Highway home gave us bluebirds: Western and Mountain, Swainson’s Hawk, Sage Thrasher, and Brewer’s Sparrow.

Credit for the treat of the day goes to our co-leader, Cricket Webb. She had scouted this trip and located a Burrowing Owl, which we all got to see close-up, sitting in his little hole in a ditch bank.

57 bird species and one cute little bunny.

~ Marianne Gordon

---

Cassin’s Finches: 2 males on left, one upper right, with bright red “caps”. Four females, lower left, 2 center, one lower right. The white stripes on the face are visible.
Members who have attended meetings through the years know that Kittitas Audubon collects dead birds, and occasionally small mammals. The bird may have hit a window or a car; it may have been found dead at your bird feeder, or been killed by a cat. Providing the bird passes the ‘smell test’ (no odor), and is in reasonably good shape, Kittitas Audubon collects it. The procedure is to place the bird in a plastic bag and immediately deposit it in your freezer accompanied by the following necessary information: (1) the full date, and (2) place or address it was found. Optional information of your name, and if known, the reason for its death, can be added. At Kittitas Audubon meetings the bird is often passed to members allowing for a close view of that species before being delivered to a natural history museum for preparation to a permanent collection. In the past all specimens went to CWU, but because there is no longer an ornithologist on campus, most of our specimens are passed to the Burke Museum in Seattle. The collection at CWU is used often by KAS for educational presentations and displays.

Peter Wimberger, Curator of The Slater Museum of Natural History at University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, provides us the following information:

For hundreds of years, natural history museums have been places of discovery—places where research, education and inspiration about the natural world happen daily. Specimens in research collections can have life spans of centuries, potentially millennia, if well cared for. Most of us are familiar with museums as places where we can see exhibits; however, behind the scenes most museums have extensive research collections. Visitors wonder what possible use are all those dead specimens?

Historically, specimens were used to describe species and variation within and between species, examine morphology and anatomy and consider structure/function relationships. They are still used in these ways, but many of the other uses, apart from education, are not as obvious.

The value of specimens really lies in their associated data—the two most important pieces are the things you wrote down and put in your plastic bag—date (including year) and place (as exact as you can). Museum specimens provide us with historical record of when and where organisms lived—many studies documenting impacts of climate change have relied on museum records to document shifts in range, and arrival and breeding dates.

Today, some of the most common uses of museum specimens would have been unimaginable to their collectors as recently as 40 years ago. The idea that museums would become libraries of DNA would have been unthinkable. We can now reconstruct the entire genomes of recently extinct species. We can look at how genetic variation in populations has changed over time and we can examine rapid changes at both the morphological and genetic level that have occurred as the result of human impacts.

The notion that we would be reconstructing historical diets or migration routes using stable isotopes on a massive scale would have been considered science fiction 50 years ago. (Stable isotopes are variants of the same element that have different numbers of neutrons, e.g. carbon-12 and carbon-13 are both stable isotopes of carbon.) We really are what we eat and drink. We can now gain a rough idea of what organisms ate by looking at stable isotopes in their tissues. By using nitrogen isotopes, researchers have established that a number of seabird species are feeding lower in the food chain than they were fifty plus years ago, possibly because of human-caused decline in fish populations. This pattern is seen in multiple seabird species on the Pacific coast. With advent of more sophisticated analytical tools, it has become possible to look at pollutant concentrations over time, or the historical presence of pathogens, like Hantavirus, in animal populations.

(Continued on page 5)
Women in birdwatching ~ 1920’s

A little-told story is that amateur bird study in the early 20th century was dominated by women. And by ‘dominated,’ I mean just that. These women—Florence Merriam Bailey (1863–1948, depicted at right), Neltje Blanchan (1865–1918), Anna Botsford Comstock (1854–1930), and others—were major players in the mainstream culture of the day. From what I can tell, it took a few years for their books to catch on. But when they did, by the ’teens and ’20s, these women’s bird books had become enormously influential, performing better as publishing phenomena than the most successful of 21st-century field guides.

Their books were—I should say, their books still are—intriguing. For sure, they can be applied to bird identification. But there is so much more inside their covers. They are, for want of a better word, scientific. They are also, and I intend precisely this word, sentimental. They are all about applying careful observation (that’s the scientific part of the equation) to the cause of avian welfare (that’s the sentimental half, obviously). Later in the 20th century, the great American scientist Evelyn Fox Keller (b. 1936) exhorted us to attune our hearts and minds to “a feeling for the organism.” That’s what comes across on every page of such works as Merriam’s Birds Through an Opera Glass, Blanchan’s Birds Every Child Should Know, and Comstock’s Handbook of Nature Study.

~ editor’s note: apologies (and thanks) to whoever may have sent this to me. I seem to have lost my source!

Dead Birds…. (Continued from page 4)

These kinds of historical analyses would have been impossible without the specimens housed in natural history museums. Just like collectors even forty or fifty years ago couldn’t have imagined the uses to which museum specimens would be put, we likely can’t imagine the new uses of museum specimens fifty years hence.

In Washington we are fortunate to have three excellent natural history museums—the Slater Museum in Tacoma, the Burke Museum in Seattle, and the Conner Museum in Pullman. If you are interested in reading more about the uses of museum collections, see: http://rmbr.nus.edu.sg/news/pdf/Suarez-Tstsui2004-MuseumCollections.pdf

So, Kittitas Audubon members, bring in your frozen dead birds (or contact Gloria or Jeb Baldi @ 933-1558 for pick-up) to leave your legacy to natural history research and education efforts. And thank you for all those past specimens!

~ Gloria Baldi

Thanks to Marte Fallshore for contributing this cartoon from “The Funny Times” newsletter.
**Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest**

May 15—18, 2014

Birding for Beginners to Experts
Birding by Boot, Boat, & Bike
Fledgling Frolics for Families
Live Music and Art Shows
Wildflower Walks
Live Raptors
Migration Marketplace with Vendors, Food, Exhibits
LeavenworthSpringBirdFest.com
Registration: 509-548-9362
Lodging & area info: 509-548-5807

---

**Wenas Audubon Campout!**

Memorial Day Weekend
(May 23-26, 2014)
Wenas Creek Campground
(SW of Ellensburg)

You’re invited to a celebration of birds, botany, and the beauty of spring in eastern Washington.

The Wenas Audubon Campout will take place on Memorial Day Weekend (May 23-26) at the Wenas Creek Campground.

This annual event invites campers to participate in a variety of activities, including birding field trips, flower walks, field sketching, and bat and owl prows. You do not need to be an Audubon member to attend. All are welcome.

Visit the Wenas Audubon website (www.wenasaudubon.org) for directions, an outline of field trips and programming, and more information. Pre-registration is not required. The campout is free and open to all ages; however, donations are encouraged (to help pay for Port-a-Potties). Every vehicle must display a Washington State Discover Pass (http://www.discoverpass.wa.gov/).

Contact: Doris Johnson, dellenj@comcast.net

---

**KEEP AN EYE ON THE SKY FOR THE LITTLE GUY(S)**

It has now been a year since the Ellensburg roost site (Old Ellensburg Hospital) for Vaux’s Swifts was torn down. We still don’t know what roost site the swifts have relocated to.

It is time for their northern migration (think Earth Day). Soooo......if you find yourself looking up in the sky ½ hour or so before sunset please keep the little guys in mind and let us know if you see any swirlings of small swift birds (ha ha – pun intended!) around a chimney, or even going down into one.

Thanks,  Janet Nelson  674-6165
Jan Demorest  933-1179

---

Here is a picture of a Great Horned Owlet, taken 4-24-14. It should be about 5 weeks old the end of this month. The nest is on a hanging light fixture in an abandoned barn in the valley. ~ Gerry Sorenson
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 _____________________________ State, ZIP ___________________________

Would you like to receive The Hooter electronically? Yes ____ No, prefer paper edition ____

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

Membership forms are also available on our Web site: Kittitasaudubon.org.

For membership information contact Membership Chair, Tuck Forsythe ~ forsythe@fairpoint.net

See The Hooter in COLOR on our website ~ http://www.kittitasaudubon.org
Upcoming KAS Field Trips

May

**3rd, Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park.** Flocks of Yellow-rumped and Nashville Warblers are passing through; other arrivals are vireos, tanagers, Turkey Vultures, and maybe Wood Ducks? 3-hour walk; meet 8 AM at Irene Rinehart riverside parking lot off of Umptanum Rd; Steve Moore & Jan Demorest lead; call 933-1179 for more info.

**10th, Saturday ~ Second Saturday Canyon Birding.** Our local “Get Intimate with the Shrub-Steppe” festival has expanded to three months of field trips! Deb Essman leads the first of 3 monthly, morning bird walks in our own Canyon country, with an early AM start - followed by plant and geology trips later in the morning. Come celebrate spring in our native habitat. Meet 7:30 AM in the BLM parking lot, Umtanum Recreation Area in the Yakima Canyon; 1½ hour walk. Full schedule at www.kittitasee.net

**31st, Saturday ~ Observatory Road Bluebirds.** Jeb and Gloria Baldi show us Western Bluebirds nesting in 20+ roadside nestboxes, near Ellensburg Pass, off of Umptanum Road. This is great habitat for them – pine groves alternate with open areas. Half-day trip; driving with short walks. Meet at 8 AM at west end of Super One parking lot. Call 933-1558 for details.

June

**7th, 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-hour walk; meet at the Irene Rinehart riverside parking lot off of Umptanum Rd at 8 AM. Leader to be announced.

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 2014

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