From eagles to hummingbirds, Idie Ulsh will explore with us how and where birds make nests, and relate interesting facts about their construction. She has photographed the nests of more than 30 species and done intensive perusal of bird nest literature. In addition to her own photos, in this unique program she will include photos from many excellent local photographers, from the University of Puget Sound Slater Museum, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Idie Ulsh is well known for her bird and butterfly programs. She has completed an intensive three-year study of bird nests. She is a past president of Seattle Audubon, founder of the Washington Butterfly Association, Seattle Audubon Master Birder, nature photographer, retired high school counselor, and an independent college counselor.

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.

Thanks to the Ellensburg Public Library for sponsoring our meetings here!
The Ellensburg 10th Annual Film Festival is coming the first weekend in October. There will be a special showing of the new film “From Billions to None” which commemorates the 100th year since the last Passenger Pigeon, Martha, died (in 1914), and brings into focus the effects of human activity and climate change on the lives of all living things on the earth.

National Audubon has just released their report on the projected decline in population of almost half of the bird species in North America. This film is a lesson from the past, illustrating, with heart-breaking intensity, the loss of a single species in less than a 50-year time-span.

A discussion will follow the showing. Show time is Saturday, October 4th at 3:00pm, at the Grand Central Theatre (3rd & Pearl), but please check the website for any changes in the schedule. Check out the website: http://ellensburgfilmfestival.com/
**September First Saturday BirdWalk** ~ Perfect weather with no wind, a typical fall morning, i.e., one that began cool but warmed into the 70’s, with spectacular trees, enjoyable and interested birders, and birds! What more could one ask? Ten enthusiastic birders found twenty-six species of birds and two mammal species, a deer and cottontail rabbits. Vireos were the birds of the day! Both Cassin’s Vireos and Warbling Vireos were spotted as they moved through the branches, hiding as quickly as they appeared. We were allowed only a ‘good look’ now and then. Maybe they were hurriedly migrating south before our temperatures drop, accompanied by the Yellow Warbler, Western Wood Pewee, and an Osprey, the last we believed to be long gone. However, a Blue-winged Teal may be a sign that winter waterfowl are arriving.

That was the September BirdWalk............. concluding the **twelfth year** of bird records at Irene Rinehart Park on the First Saturday of every month.......... 144 Saturdays!

~ Gloria Baldi

**Red Top Mountain Lookout, September 13.**

Two carloads of KAS members made use of a perfect weather day to explore Teanaway Ridge, the easternmost and nearest-to-us rumple of the Cascade mountains, between Swauk and Teanaway river valleys. Good Forest Service roads switchback up from Hwy 97 to a parking area at 5000 ft where a trail leads in half an hour to a rocky viewpoint and lookout cabin, still apparently in use by the USFS for fire-spotting.

The view is wonderful: the Stuart Range and county-line mountains in grays and oranges to the north, snowy spires near Snoqualmie Pass, massive Mt. Rainier, Table Mountain in the eastern haze, and our own valley reflecting sun off of dozens of barn roofs.

The woods were pretty quiet as many warblers and tanagers have left for the season, but Yellow-rumped Warblers and juncos remain, and Hermit Thrushes eating elderberries and a Steller’s Jay greeted us in the parking lot. In the clearing on top, birds were more active in the sunshine: Townsend’s Solitaires and several Northern Flickers were flying among lichen-covered snags, and a Northern Pygmy Owl flew from perch to pine just up the trail from us. We hoped for migrating raptors flying down the ridge but saw only a couple of Redtails, and all was quiet by mid-morning except for a couple of Violet-Green Swallows buzzing the summit and a Cassin’s Finch sunning for many minutes on a conifer perch.

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When I travel I am usually the only one who carries binoculars and watches birds. Therefore I am the “local expert” which means that people ask me what bird I am observing. I usually answer something like “it’s one of the gulls or bee-eaters or a kingfisher of some sort.” As you can see I am not a real expert. I would love to travel with Cricket Webb or Steve Moore or one of the Glorias and then I could be the one asking.

It’s not that I can’t identify the birds. I usually get a local field guide and if the bird sits still long enough, I can come up with an ID. However, I am usually on a tour and the group moves on to view ruins or a temple, and everybody says “Where’s Jim?” In fact, on our trip to India my wife had a sign saying just that printed in Hindi.

This summer we went to Africa on a kind of working vacation. We were accompanying our son-in-law on a tour to observe the efforts of the non-governmental organization, “Water Access Now.” This group raises funds to drill wells in rural villages in Ghana.

I was able to catch a few birds while touring villages and the best thing is that virtually every bird was new (except the Cattle Egret, which made its way to North America from Africa) and many were colorful. Probably the best one was the orange and black Red Bishop. They were fairly common and since we were in the company of Catholic Relief Services, I had fun with that...!

The most common bird was the Laughing Dove, according to my field guide, one of the most common birds in Africa. It is the same genus as our Spotted Dove of the Southwest or the Turtle Dove of Eurasia. The Pied Crow was about as abundant as our American Crow but has a white apron. To me, it seemed to fill the same niche, being both in rural and urban areas.

While visiting a slave camp, I spotted two Red-billed Hornbills; they helped lift the air of depression from seeing where the captives bivouacked en route to the slave ships in Accra. Hornbills are large birds with huge down-curved bills. Many hornbills have an enlarged “casque” (horny outgrowth on the head suggestive of a helmet) over the bill, possibly for resonance in calling and as a weapon in territorial disputes.

Some other remarkable birds:

**African Jacana** ~ resembling the one in tropical North and South America. When it flies, the long toes give it the nickname of “ten-legged bird”.

**Woodland Kingfisher** ~ Gorgeous turquoise. Everybody in our party looked at that one. There were lots of black and white Pied Kingfishers too. Both species fed on insects as much as small fish.

**Village Weavers** ~ These finch-like birds were very common in villages where they are relatively safe from egg predators like snakes and monkeys. They build spherical hanging nests and

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can become pests from sheer numbers. I’m glad nobody has introduced them here yet.

Little Bee-eater ~ I only saw one bee-eater but it was spectacular. Green back and buffy breast.

Vultures ~ There are lots of vultures in Africa. The ones I saw were probably White-backs.

Unidentified hawk ~ I have trouble identifying hawks at home and I’m certainly no better in a foreign country. I may (and I stress may) have seen a Lanner Falcon. Or it may have been something else. My 8X42s were not quite powerful enough to make the ID. Next time I will bring some 12 X 50s, or better yet, a spotting scope.

I saw several other birds in Ghana but they were just a warm-up for the next part of the trip. Since we were going to be in Africa, we tacked on a one-week safari in South Africa. This time I had a guide who really knew his birds. I’ll report on that in the future.

After lunch back down at the cars, we decided to drive west across the ridge via Jack Creek, descending to the Teanaway River. On the way, we found ravens and a harrier, and in the road, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows, flocking together. Back on pavement, at the Teanaway River bridge there were Black-capped Chickadees and a White-breasted Nuthatch purring in the cottonwoods. The biggest surprise and treat of the day was a single American Pipit, snagging and gulping down grasshoppers and other tasty moving targets along the river bank, performing the "Pipit Tail-Wag" dance! We pampered ourselves with coffees in Cle Elum and returned via Hwy 10 along the Yakima. Even though the Red Top hawks stood us up, we had a great day, tallying 23 species.

~ Steve Moore
2014 State of the Birds Report:
Conservation Works, but There's More Work to Do

This week, the Cornell Lab and partners released the 2014 State of the Birds Report. The report commemorates Martha, the world's last Passenger Pigeon, whose tragic passing 100 years ago spurred the creation of the world's greatest conservation movement.

In the last century we've saved Wood Ducks and Bald Eagles, Kirtland's Warblers and Brown Pelicans, and more. The new report offers the most comprehensive review of long-term trend data for U.S. birds ever, identifying a Watch List of 228 high-concern species as well as 33 Common Birds in Steep Decline to begin conserving now. Visit the Cornell Lab website to read the full report and find out what you can do to help!

Take a Fresh Look at Nature with "Project FeederWatch"

More participants needed to track birds at their feeders

Ithaca, N.Y.—A fresh new season for the Project FeederWatch citizen-science project kicks off on November 9. Anyone with an interest in birds and nature is invited to be part of the action. FeederWatch also has a fresh new look for its 28th season, plus new web tools that make participation and exploration even easier and more fun.

Join the tens of thousands of people who keep tabs on the birds that come to their feeders from November through April. Participants submit their observations to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. These long-term data from across North America could not be gathered any other way. Observations help reveal important patterns in bird distribution and numbers that may be changing over time at a continental scale or in a participant’s own backyard.

New and returning participants are urged to sign up now at www.FeederWatch.org.

"We have a new interactive tool called 'Common Feeder Birds' that allows people to learn about the food and feeder preferences of nearly 100 species, based on data collected by participants," says FeederWatch project leader Emma Greig. "The tool can be used to predict what birds can be attracted to an area so you can offer foods strategically to attract desired species."

Observations from a record number of participants last season helped scientists follow the changes in woodpecker and nuthatch populations in the Midwest where trees were infested with invasive emerald ash borer beetles.

"We need continued FeederWatch data on woodpecker and nuthatch populations throughout North America to better understand the long term consequences of this beetle invasion," Greig says. "We also need renewed FeederWatcher effort to monitor the health of House Finches, which are susceptible to a disease that causes swelling around the eyes. Our participants will be asked to report whether they looked for the disease and whether they saw sick birds."

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Project FeederWatch (Continued from page 6)

To learn more about joining Project FeederWatch and to sign up, visit www.FeederWatch.org or call the Cornell Lab toll-free at (866) 989-2473. In return for the $15 fee ($12 for Cornell Lab members), participants receive the FeederWatcher Handbook and Instructions with tips on how to successfully attract birds to your feeders, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds, and a calendar. Participants also receive Winter Bird Highlights, an annual summary of FeederWatch findings, as well as the Cornell Lab's quarterly newsletter, Living Bird News.

Project FeederWatch is a joint research and education project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.

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 ___________________________
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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?

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 organization. All memberships and donations are tax-deductible.

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

October
4th, Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park. Crisp weather, leaves fading, ducks arriving, hawks moving. Meet at the Irene Rinehart riverside parking lot off of Umptanum Rd at 8 AM. Gloria and Jeb Baldi lead; 933-1558 for info.

12th Sunday ~ Burn Area Reconnaissance. Cruise the August 2014 Snag Canyon fire area on forest roads. Are birds active in the burned areas? How profound is the habitat modification? A road trip for the curious to explore Wilson Creek and Coleman roads and maybe add a drive up the Colockum. 4WD vehicles; bring a lunch; this is a Sunday trip. Please call Steve 509-933-1179 for details.

November
1st ~ Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park. If you survived Halloween, it is a fine day to explore our riverside park. Eagles and a few waterfowl are coming, woodpeckers are hungry, leaves are coloring up, and the frost is on the pumpkin. Meet at the Irene Rinehart riverside parking lot off of Umptanum Rd at 8 AM. 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 members and prints our county bird lists. Get your bird seed here!

Kittitas Audubon
P.O. Box 1443
Ellensburg WA 98926

The Hooter ~ October 2014
The Newsletter of Kittitas Audubon - http://www.kittitasaudubon.org