CWU’s Summer Ornithology 2015
Biology 452
Four weeks: June 22nd to July 24th
Lectures: (M, TU, W, TH, F) 8:00 to 9:15 AM
Laboratory & Field Trips: Thurs 10:00 AM to 2:10 PM
Instructor: Gerald W. Scoville
Questions: jerry.scoville@gmail.com

Are you a high-powered birder…..or just one who wants to know as much as possible about birds? If so, you might consider an upper-level ornithology class being taught this summer on the CWU campus. It is Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 9:15 AM with lab & field trips on Thursdays from 10:00 PM to 2:10 PM. Class runs from June 22nd to July 24th. This could be an illuminating experience.

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!
Kittitas Audubon has a dedicated group of officers and chairpersons, all with various backgrounds and talents who meet every first Thursday of the month at 4:30-6:30 at the PUD on the Vantage Hwy across from the KXLE radio station. All individuals are welcome to join us as we discuss and make decisions for the benefit of birds and the organization.

Here is a summary of the main decisions/discussions which will allow members to be aware of the issues with which we deal. From the May 7th, 2015, meeting:

1. Discussion on the impact of the proposed Keechelus to Kachess pipeline. The watershed for Keechelus is larger but Kachess has more storage capacity, hence the proposal. The big problem with the proposal is the plan for an increased drawdown of Kachess, even with the additional water, and its possible effects.

2. Discussed the request from an Ellensburg Public Library Board member to purchase chairs for the Young Adult and Children’s section of the Library. It was (first time) voted to donate $600 toward the purchase in our appreciation for allowing KAS monthly meetings at no charge. (A second vote is required per our bylaws.)

3. KAS’s display at the library will be used by Audubon Washington.

4. A discussion about obtaining an intern to handle extended public image/relations.

5. One $2500 scholarship was awarded Dusty Pilkington, a graduate student whose research will center on historical wildfires leading to better habitat management.

6. A grant proposal has been submitted to National Audubon to educate the public on the potential impact of fire and how we can reduce the risk. (See page 4 for details)

7. A report is due at the June Board meeting on the progress of the Sagebrush Songbird Survey.

8. A shooting range proposal by the WDFW is supported with a letter from KAS.

The mission of Kittitas Audubon is to develop an appreciation of nature through education and conservation, with a focus on birds.
**FIRST SATURDAY BIRDWALK on May 2nd ~**

What a bonanza! The First Saturday BirdWalk in May was spectacular in many ways. The temperature was comfortable to a high of 70 degrees, the eleven birders were a fun bunch, the colorful Red Admiral butterflies were flitting about and did we see birds! Forty species!

It was so enjoyable that we continued to almost noon, an hour longer than usual. We normally spot more species in May with migrating songbirds reaching their breeding destination or passing through going further north or to higher elevations, along with Kittitas County’s year-round avian species, but not always. This year was great!

Because the American Dipper’s nest was under the walking bridge at the entrance to the park, we decided to check it first rather than at the end of our walk when more people would be in the area. Lo and behold, it was fledging time for the chicks! Three young were stationed in the moss near the river, watching a parent disappear under water for delightful tidbits. As the parent emerged, tiny wings fluttered and begging beaks popped open, each expecting its turn for food. The birds did not seem to mind as we watched fascinated from the bridge.

Four hours later, at the end of our bird search, we discovered not three, but four chicks being fed....a very successful nesting season!

An abundance of Tree Swallows were in the air, some staking out a cavity hole for nesting. Rough-winged and a single Violet-green were the additional swallows seen, and one lone Vaux’s Swift. Two wrens, the melodious House and the Bewick’s were in fine voice. Warblers included the Yellow-rumped, Townsend’s, and Yellow........all in breeding plumage, as well as two vireos, the Cassin’s and the Warbling. Several gorgeous Western Tanagers, a Spotted Sandpiper, and a White-crowned Sparrow were headed elsewhere to nest. Trailing 7 goslings, a pair of Canada Geese patrolled the first park lake, while a pair of Buffleheads had claimed the second.

Various other birds were the Common Merganser, Northern Flicker, Brewer’s and Red-winged Black-birds, our resident Belted Kingfisher, and the corvids: American Crow, Black-billed Magpie and Steller’s Jay. Three accipiters went unidentified, but we did spot other raptors: American Kestrel, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Turkey Vulture, and Red-tailed Hawks. The list was rounded out by several of our ‘always-seen’ species.

A second unusual event occurred at the bridge over the exit from the lake into the Yakima River. Two huge carp were easing forward and back in the short outflow channel keeping those huge unattractive mouths open to dine on tiny salmon fingerlings. Our opinion was that the Carp had an unfair advantage! ~ Come join us June 6th for the next BirdWalk.

~ Gloria Baldi

**COLUMBIA BASIN WETLANDS IN MAY (NOT APRIL) ~**

On the original April date of our annual search for wetland birds both Jo Ellen Richards and I were laid low with bronchitis. We were forced to postpone, which turned out to be a month later.

.....different but the same....

We weren’t sure what we’d find so late in the spring. What we found was lots of tall grass around all the ponds. There had to be birds hiding in there, but not a chance for seeing such small shorebirds as Dunlins and Least Sandpipers.

The ducks weren’t so shy: Shoveler, Redhead, Cackling Goose, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, and Mallard. Other wetland birds were American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Coots, Pied-billed Grebe, Red-necked Phalarope, Great Egret, and Great Blue Heron.

Notably missing were cormorant, two other teals, Canvasback, terns, snipe, and Swainson’s Hawk.

Since it was a fast trip we didn’t stop at ponds at Silica Road Exit (Sasquatch Festival at the Gorge) or drive down Crab Creek to the Columbia. We drove directly to Dotson Road to Frenchman Hills Wasteway, then over the ridge to the wetlands on Highway 26. Nevertheless we managed to spot 35 species.

Marianne Gordon

(Continued on page 6)
**KAS Receives Grant**

The grant title is “Conserving Water, Preserving Birds”, for just over $4000, from National Audubon. Our goal is to gather information from various resources and relevant parties and organizations, with an aim toward encouraging efforts that will spread information about climate change and the need to address it, and simultaneously conserve water, be bird-friendly, and also fire-wise.

From the proposal abstract:

This project aims to 1) spread the word about the impact of climate change, in particular on bird species, across the geographically challenging landscape of Eastern Washington, and 2) collaboratively develop regional-specific best practices for creating habitat that is bird-friendly, water-conserving, and also fire-wise. This can help guide neighborhood, school, and city landscaping efforts.

*Congratulations Climate Change Committee!*

**Yellow-breasted Chat**  
*photo by Gary Peltz*  
*Seen near Umtanum Creek Bridge 6-6-15*

**Officer, I can't read...**

**Cliff Swallows at Umtanum Creek Bridge 5-25-15**  
*Photos by Steve Moore*  

Lots of Cliff Swallows performing amazing aerobatics, gathering mud on the river bank to build nests under the bridge at Umtanum Creek, and defending their nests by hanging out at the entrance and looking BIG! The Eastern Kingbird was hanging out, waiting for the biggest bug to fly by, oblivious of the regulations...
**KAS SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**

One $2500 Kittitas Audubon scholarship was awarded in April to Dusty Pilkington, a CWU graduate student in Resource Management. Dusty’s research will take place in the Carlton Complex Fire area of last summer to determine the historical past climatic variability on fire frequency and severity, as well as the impacts of 20th century fire suppression on forests at the sites. Although fire is a natural part of the landscape, catastrophic fires can overwhelm animal populations already threatened by human population pressures. Knowledge is needed for land and wildlife managers to know what conditions they are to restore toward, especially when planning prescribed burning and thinning. More results from Dusty’s research will be provided in the future.

*Congratulations, Dusty!!!*

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This pair of Evening Grosbeaks were dining at her mesh feeder on May 29th. Sharon Lumsden caught them in the act. Gorgeous birds….but such “pigs”!!!

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**Visit your State Parks ~ FREE!!!**

Mark these dates on your calendar. Pack up the family or some friends and get out of the house!

- June 6 – National Trails Day
- June 13 – National Get Outdoors Day
- August 25 – National Park Service birthday
- September 26 –National Public Lands Day
- November 11 – Veterans Day

On these special days a Discover Pass will not be required to visit any State Park in Washington State.

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That the birds of worry and care fly over your head, this you cannot change, but that they build nests in your hair, this you can prevent.

~ Chinese proverb ~

...if you want to...!
Looking Ahead...

Visiting with Raptors:  
Sixth Annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival
Saturday, September 12th, 2015

Join the Methow Valley Ranger District, North Central Washington Audubon Society, and HawkWatch International this fall for the sixth annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival! This free family event combines activities in Pateros with a field trip to the Wells Wildlife Area and a shuttle to the Chelan Ridge Hawk-Watch site to learn about and celebrate raptors as they journey to winter territories. This all happens at Memorial Park in Pateros, Washington on Saturday, September 12, 2015.

You will get to visit vendors, see raptor demonstrations, and take a shuttle to the spectacular Chelan Ridge Raptor Migration Site. Shuttles will run from Pateros to Chelan Ridge to see migrating raptors. During the festival last year participants saw Broad-winged Hawks, Goshawks, and a Prairie Falcon, along with many more common raptors.

Chelan Ridge sits 5675 feet above sea level along the flyway of migrating raptors. Biologists who live at the Ridge during the migration season will offer insight into what it is like to live and breathe raptors and show how the birds are banded and tracked. This is an amazing experience with environmental education and interpretation conducted by on-site educators, Forest Service personnel, and volunteers.

Beginning on July 1st please visit our website (ncwaudubon.org.) to learn more about the festival and to sign up for the shuttle.

(Continued from page 3)

Spectacular Hawk Encounter on GISS Field Trip ~  Deb Essman treated a small group of birders to the birding experience for the ages at the Get Intimate With the Shrub Steppe birding trip up the Umptanum Canyon. The group had just reached the turn-around point up the canyon and was watching an immature Harrier as it worked its way along the north rim of the canyon. Then like a streak, a Prairie Falcon appeared from the south. After a brief encounter, the falcon streaked back with the harrier in pursuit. Nobody thought the harrier would catch the falcon but it sure tried. We think the falcon took a small rodent or other prey from the harrier. The group spotted some spectacular riparian birds including the Yellow Breasted Chat (see photo on page 4) and Lazuli Bunting, as well as Bullocks Oriole and both Eastern and Western Kingbirds, but years later they will recall the hawk chase as a highpoint in their birding lives.  ~ Jim Briggs
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  ____

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

Thanks for Renewing!
Barry Brunson & Judy Hallisey
Richard Layman    Micah Keith Wirth
Diane Driscoll    Sharon & Scott Lumsden
Mark Benedict & Mary Shaw
Jan Demorest & Steve Moore
Welcome New Members!
Dianna & Bill Haberman
Upcoming KAS Field Trips

June

June 6 ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park. "What is so rare as a day in June? Then, if ever, come perfect days..." and almost always the best species count of the year (as many as 40), with many birds nesting above our heads or hidden on the ground. Meet at 8:00 am at the riverside parking lot in Irene Rinehart Park, off of Umptanum Rd. Jeb & Gloria Baldi lead.

July

July 4 ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park. Enjoy summer taking a walk in the park, with many birds to greet the day, and a few fledglings begging for food from limbs aloft. Beat the heat early and enjoy the Farmer’s market afterwards. Meet at 8:00 am at the riverside parking lot in Irene Rinehart Park, off of Umptanum Road. Leader TBA.

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.

Get your bird seed here!