Over the years, Washington State has hosted 515 species of birds - everything from the largest swans (with wingspans of 7 feet) to the tiniest songbirds (Bushtits with a wing-span of 6 inches). Some of our birds are so dull they have almost no color at all, though their voices can be very sweet (Warbling Vireos are a good example). Other birds croak like frogs but glisten like gems (Wood Ducks). Where did this spectacular diversity come from? The short answer is: from dinosaurs. The long answer is: 150 million years of evolution.

Come hear master birder Connie Sidles tell you all the latest information and theories about how birds evolved, including one of the most exciting recent finds: an ancient baby bird caught in amber. Find out about the newest discoveries being dug out of the slate of northern China, a fossil bed so rich it will take us decades to tabulate and understand it all.

Connie has a degree in Egyptology from the University of Chicago, where she also studied paleontology. She is chair of Seattle Audubon's Publications Committee, a two-time former board member, and soon-to-be chair of the Conservation Committee. If you ask her, she will even take a crack at answering the age-old question that has puzzled philosophers and historians: Which came first, the chicken or the egg?
Through the heat of summer, your Kittitas Audubon Board is carrying on. Birds are always discussed and Short-eared Owls and Evening Grosbeaks were subject birds. Two outlying residences have SE Owls nesting this year.

Minutes and Treasurer’s reports were approved. A letter supporting the protection of National Monuments was signed by KAS.

Tom and Diane Gauron will lead the August and September First Saturday BirdWalks.

Discussion continues about memberships. Because the Hooter is the largest expense in the KAS annual budget, a plan to determine what members wish to receive the paper issue is necessary to reduce that expense. Some National Audubon members who join to receive the magazine may not be interested in the local activities. (The Hooter is always available on line at kittitasaudubon.org.)

Programs are being scheduled by individual Board members, and the year’s roster is complete. (However, it would be excellent if a member decided to oversee the details each month of the programs. There is a step-by-step procedure……and your help would be extremely appreciated. See Judy Hallisey if your talent needs an outlet.)

Norm Peck announced that a preliminary draft for the Wenas Target shooting area is available.

Meghan Anderson has secured outdoor toilet screens to place over vents to deter birds entering for nesting or roosting; she is furnishing them to local State Parks, City Parks, and the Forest Service. (This is nicknamed the Poo Poo project and a complete article appeared in the Ellensburg Daily Record on August 15th.)

Barry Brunson stated the Ellensburg City Council has been provided information to encourage the City to become 25% solar by 2025. Because there is a Great Blue Heron rookery on the railroad bridge crossing the Columbia River, Kittitas Audubon is requesting to be on the comment list if any work is planned for bridge improvement. Currently there are no plans. GBH are sensitive to disturbances during nesting season.

Details were discussed for the Kittitas Audubon Summer Social on August 17th.

Do come join us Thursday Sept. 7th at 4:30 at the Methodist Church across from the Ellensburg Public Library. Gloria Baldi

The mission of Kittitas Audubon is to develop an appreciation of nature through education and conservation, with a focus on birds.

KAS BOARD MEMBERS
President – Judy Hallisey 270-792-9188
Vice President – Barb Masberg 509-406-3104
Secretary – Jim Briggs 933-2231
Treasurer – Sharon Lumsden 968-3889
Conservation – Norm Peck 933-4233
Education – OPEN
Field Trips – Steve Moore 933-1179
Historian – Gloria Lindstrom 925-1807
Programs – OPEN
Publicity – Meghan Anderson 253-987-7629
Scholarships – Gloria Baldi 933-1558
Climate Change–Barry Brunson: 270-792-9186
Past President – Tom Gauron 968-3175
*Newsletter – Jan Demorest 933-1179
Membership – OPEN
*Bluebird boxes – Jan Demorest 933-1179
*Social Greeter – Kay Forsythe 925-2356
*Christmas Bird Count–Phil Mattocks
*non-voting members

KAS Board Meetings are held at 4:30 PM ~ 1st Thursday of each month at the Methodist Church across from The Ellensburg Public Library. 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, then 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 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.

The Hooter is the newsletter of Kittitas Audubon, published monthly except for July.
March 4 ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park ~ 6 people - Short walk to the lake & back. Everyone left early to avoid the very hot weather. The following species were seen:

- Canada Geese
- European Starling
- Northern Flicker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Tree Swallow
- Northern Rough-winged Swallow
- American Robin
- American Goldfinch
- Cedar Waxwing
- Western Wood-Pewee
- Brewer’s Blackbird
- Collared Dove

~ Tom Gauron

August 9th ~ Naneum Ridge Car Trip ~
Wednesday, August 9th was a hot and smoky day in Ellensburg, however, 3 intrepid birders went on a safari up the Dawson Creek and Coleman Creek area. It was smoky but not as bad as Ellensburg, which was completely invisible in the smoke-filled valley below. We were in a 4WD which was necessary for the last section of the trip to Naneum Point; AWD could have made it easily as far as the turn off from Swift Creek. This is a Green Dot area and maps may be picked up at the Washington Fish and Wildlife office in Ellensburg. Twenty-five bird species were identified in the forest; many were juveniles. Highlights for this birder were the Sooty Grouse, Brown Creeper, and Williamson’s Sapsucker. Of course, there were plenty of others, including American Kestrel, American Robin, Magpie, California Quail, Cedar Waxwing, Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Mountain Chickadee, Mourning Dove, Northern Flicker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red-tailed Hawk, Townsend’s Solitaire, Turkey Vulture, Western Bluebird, Western Wood Peewee, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler and various LBBs (Little Brown Birds and others flitting around). One treat was stumbling upon “Judy’s Tamarack Park” which was designated in honor of Judy Golladay who passed away in 1998. She was a Rodeo Grandma and range rider, who patrolled the area and minded cattle for the Schneblys. The “park” has a mature stand (over 500 years old in some cases) of Western Larch (Tamarack), firs, aspen and pines. Needless to say, birds love the area. A good time was had by all. ~ Barb Masberg
In spite of inaction and even harmful action about climate change at the federal level, many state and local communities continue to step up to meet our responsibilities to our environment, our energy security, and our children and grandchildren.

On Tue 22 Aug, the Olympia City Council passed a resolution calling for Puget Sound Energy to close its coal-fired Colstrip power plant, and to replace it with 100% renewables, along with advances in energy efficiency, storage, and grid management. See http://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article169001167.html. [Also see Judy Hal-lisey’s Daily Record LTE about Colstrip that was reprinted in the August Hooter. She also found the Olympia info.]

“Net-metering” is the means by which many utilities are obligated to reimburse customers, at the regular retail rate, who transfer to the grid solar power beyond what the customers themselves use. This is a great incentive for increasing the use of solar. Unfortunately, but perhaps not surprisingly, some well-funded, fossil-fuel and utility-allied groups are trying to stifle or roll back net-metering. Arizona and Nevada have seen some of the most egregious examples of this. However, grass-roots efforts have scored a striking success. See “Rooftop Revolution: Solar advocates win a surprising victory in Nevada”, an article by Elizabeth Shogren in the 21 Aug 2017 issue of High Country News (HCN) . For details, see http://


For those unfamiliar with HCN, it is a serious magazine, published in CO since 1970, and its name refers to topography, not mind-alteration. (smile...)

Editor’s note: The HCN article is long, but well-written and researched, and worth the time invested to read it.

Thanks to Barry Brunson, KAS Climate Change Committee Chair

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Kittitas Audubon Needs Help!

We have three important positions that need to be filled:

1. Program chair
2. Membership chair
3. Education chair

If you’ve felt the desire to help out in a more active way with the work and mission of Kittitas Audubon, please talk with one of our board members at the next meeting or BirdWalk, or send an email to kittitasaudubon@hotmail.com.

We can provide you with a “job” description and discuss the role you will play! We hope you’ll consider joining us!
LAND USE CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA...
—and what it means for us  by Jim Briggs

My first job as an agricultural extension agent was with the Broome County, New York Extension Service. They had a position for a wildlife biologist because in the late 1960’s and ’70s farmland was being retired since hardscrabble farms in rural New York were no longer economically viable. This released land was purchased by city and town people and used as non-farm rural residences. These new owners - many from New York City - had absolutely no idea of how to use the land.

This was an opportunity for the Extension Service to hire an agent who could help these landowners define and achieve their goals. What were their goals? - to use the land to help pay their taxes and, more importantly, to provide a home for wildlife, including birds.

In Broome County, and many others in upstate New York, this had the effect of creating a patchwork of small wildlife refuges that were managed by willing landowners. During my tenure there I witnessed the arrival of the Northern Cardinal and Mockingbird from the south, as well as the Eastern Coyote from the west. The two birds were probably helped along by a warming climate, but they were able to move north because of the abundance of suitable habitat offered by these retired farmlands. The coyote apparently didn’t care about the temperature. It moved to the Southeast as well as the Northeast.

Now, almost 50 years later, I’ve had a couple of opportunities to visit South Africa. What did I find? Almost a rerun of my early career - I discovered that a plethora of large cattle ranches had been converted to wildlife parks. These are privately owned and managed for profit as safari businesses, both for camera-clickers and, yes, hunters. There are about 900 (!) of these wildlife parks in South Africa, covering almost 17% of the total land area in the country, and ranging in size up to 150,000 acres!

Like our own West, most land use in South Africa has traditionally been cattle ranching, but due to several factors, including: 1) decreasing profitability, 2) increased stock theft (rustling), and 3) re-emergence of South Africa into the world community, entrepreneurs saw an opportunity.

It is interesting to note that these parks had to be “stocked” with animals from national parks from throughout Africa because most indigenous wildlife had been extirpated during the heyday of cattle ranching.

Of course, there are several problems. The parks have to be fenced and the game managed. This tends to favor those species most sought by the tourists. This means the “Big Five”. These animals—Elephant, Cape Buffalo, Rhinoceros, Leopard and Lion—are what people like to report as having seen when they get back home. This presents problems for managers because two of them, the Elephant and Lion, are very destructive, the Rhinoceros is critically endangered due to poaching, and the Leopards don’t care about fences. Also, the emphasis on the big charismatic animals doesn’t promote management for diversity. People don’t “ooh and aah” over Bush Pigs and Duikers (small antelope) so there is no real incentive to re-introduce them. There are exceptions. My wife got hyper-excited every time we saw a Warthog and she and her ilk probably gave rise to the “Ugly Five”: the Warthog, Vulture, Hyena, Crocodile, and Stork.

(Continued on page 6)
Managers have to be cognizant of the gene pools and take steps to limit in-breeding. Also there has to be a healthy balance between prey species and predators - this is the problem with lions. They kill other predators and, unregulated, can make serious inroads on prey. The elephants are so destructive that a single animal will uproot four trees a day to eat the nutrient-rich cambium layer. Managers are experimenting with contraception and other creative non-lethal controls.

The two game parks we visited each had a veterinarian and ecologist on the management team and they use a variety of tools. A black rhino had torn a hole in the fence and escaped and had to be tranquilized and transported back. The loss of a rhino would be very costly. That’s why the private reserves have excellent security and are likely the salvation of the two rhino species. Rhino horns bring hundreds of thousands of dollars on the Asian market.

In a way, the preserves operate like the large cattle ranches most of them displaced. Animals are bought and sold according to their needs. If another safari park cannot be found, sometimes surplus animals go to shooting preserves - we were served antelope meat a couple of times at our safari resort.

These wildlife parks work just like the non-farm rural residences I worked with in New York. Without much public land, they provide abundant habitat for all kinds of plants and animals, and the all-important connectivity, so that genetic material can be transferred. As a birder, I was overjoyed at the diversity of birds I saw. Even the fences which are such a problem for game managers are no problem for birds (Ostriches excepted).

Now, can we apply this trend back home? Look around the Kittitas Valley. We have a patchwork of private and public land and each owner—DNR and DFW in the case of state land—has different management goals. But most of these would be amenable to educational efforts to promote wildlife habitat. Kittitas Audubon has been doing its part for decades. Bluebird trails, raptor perches, Barn Owl and Kestrel houses, birding trails and so on. We know that even the KAS members who live in town have “mini-wildlife preserves.” Now if we can entice other landowners to dedicate a little more acreage to native plants* and work with those willing to really manage for birds, we can do the same thing as they are doing in South Africa - promote biodiversity. The Teanaway Community Forest Committee is doing this. So can all the “gentlemen/women farmers” out there. It all adds up.

~ article and photos by Jim Briggs

* Editor’s Note: KAS, with a grant from National Audubon, created a publication listing many native plants suitable for the Kittitas Valley that support birds and insects. Find it at: kittitasaudubon.org Click on “Climate Change and Native Plants”.
Visit with Raptors:
September 15-16, 2017
8th Annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival

Join the Chelan/Entiat Ranger District, North Central Washington Audubon Society and HawkWatch International this fall for the eighth annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival! This free family event combines educational activities in Pateros with field trips to the Wells Wildlife Area and Chelan Ridge HawkWatch site. On Friday the 15th, there is a raptor ID and migration workshop at the local Fire Hall with Dr. Dave Oleyar from HawkWatch International. This all happens in Pateros, Washington on the weekend of September 16th. Register in advance for the field trips and workshop at ncwaudubon.org, or visit the exhibits at Pateros any time during that Saturday.

This festival is scheduled to coincide with the peak of southbound migration of raptors at Chelan Ridge — the best place in Washington to view fall migrating raptors. Past festivals have brought several hundred people to see hawks up close, enjoy Memorial Park, and spend the day learning all about raptors. So please join us for the 2017 festival!

To sign up for any of the activities or to learn more about the festival please visit our website: ncwaudubon.org.

2017 KAS “Summer Social”

Fine weather, fine food, fine company, and the perfect setting made this year’s gathering a great success. More than 40 folks showed up with tasty side-dishes. New president, Judy Hallisey presented awards for the past year.

Wenas Wildlife Area Survey

While the Citizen’s Advisory Group is focused on target shooting, part of the effort is to reduce or eliminate conflicts with other users of this public land, and increase user safety. To that end, the more information about who uses what areas when (beyond the Audubon Annual weekend near Wenas) the better job we’ll be able to do.

Please click on this link to take the survey:
Survey on people using the Wenas Wildlife Area

~ Norm Peck, KAS representative

Wenas Wildlife Area is a 105,460-acre (42,680 ha) protected area managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife located in Yakima and Kittitas counties. The property was acquired in the mid-1960s to provide wintering grounds for the Yakima elk herd and is managed with the chief purpose of providing healthy wildlife habitat.

Wenas Wildlife Area offers creek hikes and big views of rolling ridges and the Yakima River Canyon just south of Ellensburg. This wildlife reserve includes several types of habitat from semi-arid shrub-steppe and grassland to pine forest. The boundary between shrub-steppe and pine woods supports a rich variety of bird life and gives the area an outstanding reputation for birdwatching.

(White-headed Woodpecker, web photo)
8-21-17 ~ Judy Hallisey: “Found up high above Kachess Lake on an old logging road, a long way from water. No real nest, nestled along a cut bank. Appears abandoned. Grouse??”
This was Eclipse Day - maybe the hen was hiding! Confused by darkness?
(See photo on page 3)

Charli Sorenson, who monitors a Kestrel box with her husband, Nels, on their property, sent the following report. They live east off the Vantage Hwy in the sagebrush. They have also had a family of Short-eared Owls around.

From Charli & Nels Sorenson in Sagelands ~ “Oh, forgot to tell you that in mid-July, while coming home after work up the Vantage highway from the Columbia, we saw fledgling Sage Grouse (about 5-6) cross the road. They looked to have nearly all their flight feathers, but were running flat out rather than flying. We didn’t see the parent/mom but she was probably already in the grass when we caught sight of them.”

Report from Secret Canyon ~ Sharon Lumsden:
“I had a group of about a dozen Western Bluebirds taking turns at bathing in the bird bath this morning!

Yellow-rumped Warblers are making their way through also.
I’m seeing big groups of Kestrels (4 - 12 in same area) & they’re flying & swooping close to the ground. Different from normal. ”

THE BIRDS

Puccini was Latin, and Wagner Teutonic,
And the birds are incurably philharmonic.
The skylark sings a roundelay,
The crow sings "The Road to Mandalay",
The nightingale sings a lullaby
And the sea gull sings a gullaby.
That’s what shepherds listened to in Arcadia
Before some one invented TV’s and radia.

~ Ogden Nash
Membership Form ~ Kittitas Audubon Society

Please make checks payable to: Kittitas Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1443, Ellensburg, WA 98926

Name ___________________________ Phone ___________________
Address _______________________________________________________________________
City ___________________________ State _______ Zip ____________________
Email Address ___________________________________________________________________

Would you like to receive occasional emails related to Audubon issues? Yes ___ No___

YES: I want to ‘Go Green’ by receiving The Hooter Newsletter online version only ____
Choosing the online newsletter option saves KAS $15 Annually in printing/mailing costs!

Go Green and enjoy the online version in Color!

Join KAS with any of these Annual Membership Options: (Check your option below)

Kittitas Audubon Society Individual Membership $20 ____  Family Membership $30 ____
Premium Memberships: Bluebird $50 ____  Kestrel $75 ____  Hawk $100 ____
Lifetime Individual Membership: $300 ____  Lifetime Family Membership $500 ____
Business Membership $200 ____  Business Lifetime Membership $1000 ____

Make a Charitable Donation: What interests you? We want to know!

Please enter dollar amount donation below:

Scholarship Fund $______________  Nest Boxes $______________
Bird Surveys $______________  General Interest $______________
Community Education $______________  Special Committees $______________

May we list your name in The Hooter to acknowledge your membership/donation? Yes ___ No___

Your generous donation to a specific project is symbolic. Kittitas Audubon is a chapter of National Audubon Society serving the communities of Kittitas County, Washington. Go to kittitasaudubon.org for more information. KAS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

Give the Gift of Kittitas Audubon for a year! This gift membership is for:

Name ___________________________ Phone ___________________
Address _______________________________________________________________________
City ___________________________ State _______ Zip ____________________
Email Address ___________________________________________________________________

You may join National Audubon Society separately by visiting their website at:
http://www.audubon.org

THANK YOU.....TO KITITAS 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!
September

2nd, Saturday ~ First Saturday BirdWalk, Irene Rinehart Park. Take a healthy break on Labor Day weekend, and contemplate summer’s end. Many birds have courted, nested and raised a family; now they’re planning a vacation in the tropics, leaving us to wonder what kind of winter is in store for us this year. Meet at 8 AM at Irene Rinehart parking lot by the river for a 3 hour walk in the sunshine. Leaders Tom & Diane Gauron; call 968-3175.

21st, Thursday ~ Program -“The Evolution of Birds” ~ 7 PM at Hal Holmes Center, next to the library on Ruby St. Hope to see y’all there!

October

7th, Saturday ~ First Saturday BirdWalk, Irene Rinehart Park. Meet at 8 AM at Irene Rinehart riverside parking lot off Umptranum Road for a 3-hour walk. Irish trees (green and orange), Scottish skies (gray and blue), American birds (many colors). Tom & Diane Gauron lead; call 968-3175.