All Audubon meetings, held on the 3rd Thursday of each month, 7:00pm, September through May (except this March, December), at the Hal Holmes Center next to the Ellensburg Public Library, are open to the public. Please come and meet with us, and stay afterwards for juice, treats, and conversation.

Many thanks to the Ellensburg Public Library for sponsoring our meetings!

DATE CHANGE!
March 14th General Meeting Program:
Views and Responses to Climate Change and the environment in Togo, West Africa”

by James King, a CWU grad who spent a year in Togo with the Peace Corps.

This presentation will be discussing the Togolese views toward climate change and the environment, and how this impacts the responses and lifestyles of modern day Togolese to the potential threats presented by climate change. Impacts of climate change are already being felt, and many are already developing unique and relevant responses. Food shortages, flooding, changes in bird migration, altered insect activity, and other current expressions of climate change will be discussed.

WHO WHO? YOU THAT’S WHO!!
KAS is looking for an enthusiastic individual to fill this board position:

Vice President
Please email Judy Hallisey: hydrojude@gmail.com if you are interested.

Birthday PARTY TIME!
We need your help! See page 3 for more info!
Board Notes

By Gloria Baldi

Actions of the February 7th KAS Board meeting:

💡 Guest Laura Busby, Interpretive Specialist with the WA State Parks and Recreation Commission, as well as a KAS member, attended to discuss events that could be coordinated between the Parks and KAS while avoiding conflicting scheduling. Field trips...both bird and plant, citizen science projects highlighting the shrub-steppe, and nest boxes at Olmstead Park were some of the possibilities mentioned.

💡 All KAS members are encouraged to suggest possible programs to the new Program Chair, Lesley McGalliard, who will coordinate the details.

💡 Norm Peck stated via email that WDFW hopes to complete improvements at the shooting ranges (on Durr Road and on Sheep Company Road) by the end of the year, and that the required SEPA and permit scoping will begin soon.

💡 The Board, by unanimous vote, signed onto the suction dredging letter with 53 additional organizations urging the WA State legislature to adopt regulations curtailing this activity to protect the quality in WA streams and rivers. Regulations are already in place in ID, OR, and CA.

💡 Barry Brunson had a ‘thumbs up’ in the Daily Record for the 15 new electric vehicle charging stations in Cle Elum. Barry also had a LTE (Letter to the Editor) in the Daily Record and the UKC Tribune about climate-change-related internal records that ExxonMobil will have to release.

💡 Meghan Anderson suggested to the CWU new Sustainability Council that they form a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan (GGRP), something that WA is encouraging all public institutions to do. Meghan also had a LTE dealing with the need and economic wisdom of more electric vehicle charging stations in Ellensburg.

💡 Judy Hallisey and Barry Brunson joined 500 others activists from around the state in Olympia for the January 29th Environmental Lobby Day. They were able to meet briefly with all three of our legislators.

💡 KAS elections occur in May. We will need a Vice President.

💡 KAS will have a table at the KEEN Winter Fair.

💡 KAS hopes to have a table at the CWU April 27th Earth Day celebration. Barry Brunson has volunteered to staff it, but he would appreciate some help. (Is that you?)

💡 Materials for displays need to be inventoried; where are they and who has them?

💡 KAS will be displaying in three windows in the Ellensburg Public Library lobby during the month of August.

💡 Jan Demorest is organizing a lunch meeting for Teri, our Audubon WA staffer.

💡 The April ART, SNAKE and CAKE event was discussed. (Article elsewhere in this Hooter.)

“One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of March thaw, is the Spring.”

—Aldo Leopold
APRIL 18th
KAS’s 30TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

With Cake! Bird Items Galore! Friendly Snakes...and Maybe More!

But we need your help—with donations of items!

Presently we have some donated art (original and prints), ‘top of the line’ seed feeders, nestboxes, and birding vests with many pockets. But more selection will be more fun!

CONSIDER THIS! How about refreshing your wall décor by donating a few pieces, then finding something at the sale to replace the old ones to which you’ve become accustomed? Books? DVD’s? Figurines? Jewelry with a nature motif? Unframed prints with nature theme? The only requirement is that the item be in good condition.

Special items will be offered through a silent auction. Others will be by donation.

If you have an item that you wish to add to the sale, do phone us at 509-933-1558 for pick-up, or drop it off on the enclosed porch at 712 E 2nd Avenue • 509-933-1179 in Ellensburg.

We will be collecting between now and April 5th in order to prepare for the sale.

All proceeds will support KAS education programs. Since we are a 501c(3) non-profit, the value of your items is tax-deductible.
Foggy! Eleven walkers hoped for a lift but the moist cover dispersed only later in a splendid sunny afternoon. So, birdwatching was slightly compromised, yet a robust list of 22 hardy species was accumulated. Specialties glimpsed early in the density of the morning mist were a pair of *Hairy Woodpeckers* – always worth looking at twice to check the bill length – and a shy pair of *Wilson’s Snipes* flitting along a watery ditch. Several other birds were mostly heard – in brush and across the river: *Bewick’s* and *Pacific Wrens*, *Song Sparrows*, *Jays*, *Ravens* and *Magpies*. We scoped a pair of *American Wigeon* in the lower pond and a *Common Merganser* and *Mallards* navigated the river, but the upper pond held only a small gaggle of *Canadas*. A *Red-tailed Hawk* flushed from near the nest along the roadway – hard to tell yet if a pair are planning on settling here. A *Finch* answered to *Siskins*’ calls on playback, but we got visuals of *American Goldfinches* later and decided that there’s no such thing as a “Solitary Siskin”. Absent this morning were *Eagles*, *Dippers* and *Kingfishers*. The woodland trail was too icy to walk, there was thin ice on the ponds, and there’s more beaver activity on Reecer Creek.

Field Trips

March 2nd

**First Saturday BirdWalk, Irene Rinehart Park.** Meet at 8 AM at Irene Rinehart parking lot for a 3-hour walk. As the season changes, we might expect some vocal wrens, woodpeckers and chickadees thinking about spring, and a nesting Redtail pair? Steve & Jan lead, 509-933-1179.

March 22nd

**Crab Creek, Sandhill Cranes & Waterfowl.** For those who can’t attend the whole 3-day 2019 Othello Sandhill Crane Festival (see box to the right), we repeat a favorite trip to celebrate the first days of Spring. A looping, full-day drive includes lower Crab Creek, wildlife areas along Corfu Road, ponds near Othello, and perhaps a stop at Potholes Reservoir. At some point, by listening for the purring calls of these majestic birds, we generally find groups of cranes to scope and observe. **Please call Steve & Jan to RSVP, 509-933-1179.**

April 6th

**First Saturday BirdWalk, Irene Rinehart Park.** Spring birding and a 3-hour walk in our riverside park; we meet at 8 AM. April birdwatching is great through the still-bare branches—next month birds will be hiding among the leaves. Spring arrivals may include ospreys, vultures, swallows, warblers, maybe a shorebird. Leader TBA.

The Othello Sandhill Crane Festival announced the 2019 theme: “Elegant Travelers on a Journey.”

The 22nd annual festival will be held March 22, 23, 24, 2019 in Othello Washington.

With the celebration of the spring migration of the Sandhill cranes, the festival offers a variety of events for the whole family to enjoy and learn. Online registration opens on February 1, 2019.

This event includes 3 days of Columbia Basin field trips, a raptor display, and a full day of lectures (Saturday) on subjects including migration, ice age floods, wolves, photography, mammoths, drones, owls, albatrosses, amphibians, fish, and bird brains! A must see and hear! [https://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org/](https://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org/)
Avian Promiscuity?
A Post-Valentine’s Day Caution

Submitted by Barry Brunson

Promiscuous behavior sometimes is ascribed to birds, and perhaps we should be more cautious—not to avoid offending our feathered friends, but just to keep from imposing human cultural conventions on them. Betsy Mason has an interesting article in the 15 Sep 2018 (yes, I’m way behind in some reading!) issue of Science News, entitled “In the animal kingdom, what is promiscuous?” It includes a nifty photo of a greater Prairie Chicken and links to peer-reviewed literature. See https://tinyurl.com/y7soox2c

GOT BINOCULARS?
Consider donating a pair (or more) to KAS for their education programs with school classes and local organizations. Contact our Education Chair, Steve Hall for more info. (See page 2)

BOXES FOR SALE
Hand-crafted Bluebird, Kestrel, and Barn Owl Boxes
Please contact Tom Gauron at 509.968.3175 for more information.

“Friends and acquaintances are the surest passport to fortune.”
—Arthur Schopenhauer

Hummingbird Peril in Cold Weather!

by Gloria Baldi

Last month during the very cold and snowy weather on February 6th I, a cousin who lives in Yelm, WA, knowing we are bird people, phoned us. Daily he has several Anna’s Hummingbirds and hangs a feeder on a chain, while bringing the feeder in at night to eliminate freezing. In the morning through the window, as he was on his way to hang the feeder, he noticed the little ones very active, with one seeming to be in distress. Upon examination he realized the one to have its tongue (a long delicate membrane) frozen to the chain. Immediately he put warm water on the chain, and as it flew off, he hoped no permanent injury had occurred. It appeared the activity of the birds was in concern for the ‘frozen’ one.

Since hearing of that event, another story appeared regarding a hummingbird trying to help another in distress when it became stuck in the center depression of the feeder. You may be able to still find it on line under hummingbird-attempts-to-rescue-companion-stuck-in-sequim-feeder. Birds never fail to amaze us.
March 2019
Barry Brunson, Chair, Climate Change Committee

The Military Agrees (but may not have a plan)

The Pentagon issued a congressionally mandated report on 10 Jan 2019. It states clearly that climate change is real and that it is a threat to national security. The report seems to be a little sketchy on the steps needed to address those threats. The DoD report is at https://tinyurl.com/ybvcfgko.

Update: The link provided above currently takes one to a blank webpage, even though formerly it led to the DoD report. The report in question remains available in alternate places, e.g. at http://tinyurl.com/y83lp4jh.

That is through the nonprofit Center for Climate and Security (https://climateandsecurity.org/about/). An interesting article about the report is “Climate change threatens a majority of mission-critical military bases, Pentagon report says”, by Tara Copp in the 18 Jan 2019 issue of the magazine Military Times. That article is at http://tinyurl.com/yc9qqvst; it also contains an alternate link to the report itself.

Good Food News: Lower-Carbon-Footprint Eating Makes Us Healthier

A study at Tulane University confirms that reducing the carbon footprint of what we eat won’t just combat global warming—it also will promote health! For details, see the 24 Jan 2019 Science Daily posting at https://tinyurl.com/yacwzad2. The original peer-reviewed article is to appear

Bird of the Month

Varied Thrush

For the first time in five years, our back yard is a gathering place for over a dozen Varied Thrushes. With their bright orange coloring and upbeat song, they bring a touch of happiness to this winter weather. Here is a bit of information on our colorful friends.

Varied Thrushes are stocky songbirds with large, rounded heads, straight bills, and long legs. Usually seen standing horizontally on the ground or in a tree, they often look plump-bellied with a relatively short tail.

Male Varied Thrushes are dark blue-gray on the back and rich burnt-orange below with a sooty-black breastband and orange line over the eye. The wings are blackish with two orange bars and orange edging to the flight feathers.

Females have the same patterns, but are paler gray-brown than males.

Varied Thrushes breed in dark understories of humid evergreen and mixed forests along the Pacific Coast. In the winter, many move into dense parks, gardens, and backyards. Varied Thrushes are rare but regular winter visitors to the Upper Midwest and Northeast.

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

Name
Address
City State Zip
Email (please print)
Phone

☐ NEW Membership ☐ RENEWING Membership

Membership Options:
☐ KAS Individual $20 ☐ Family $30

Premium Memberships:
☐ Bluebird $50 ☐ Kestrel $75 ☐ Hawk $100
☐ Lifetime Individual $300 ☐ Lifetime Family $500

Make a Charitable Donation: (Please enter dollar amount)
Scholarship Fund $________ Nest Boxes $________
Education $________ General $________

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

Please indicate membership preferences below:

☐ YES I want to “Go Green” by receiving the Hooter newsletter online only

☐ YES I wish to receive occasional emails related to Audubon activities

May we print your name in the Hooter to acknowledge your membership/donation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ GIVE THE GIFT OF KITTITAS AUDUBON!
Please send gift recipient’s name, address, email, and phone to address below.

Please make checks payable to:
Kittitas Audubon Society
PO Box 1443
Ellensburg WA 98926

THANK YOU!
Mark Your Calendars!

First Saturday BirdWalks
Irene Rinehart Park on Umptanum Road at 8 AM for a 3-hour walk

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Board Meetings
Meet at 4:30pm at the Methodist Church on the corner of 5th and Ruby

March 7th

Thursday Programs
Start at 7:00pm • Hal Homes

March 14th (DATE CHANGE)
Views and Responses to Climate Change and the environment in Togo, West Africa by James King, a CWU grad who spent a year in Togo with the Peace Corps.

Field Trip—March 22nd
Crab Creek, Sandhill Cranes & Waterfowl. For those who can’t attend the whole 3-day 2019 Othello Sandhill Crane Festival (see page 4), we repeat a favorite trip to celebrate the first days of Spring. A looping, full-day drive includes lower Crab Creek, wildlife areas along Corfu Road, ponds near Othello, and perhaps a stop at Potholes Reservoir. At some point, by listening for the purring calls of these majestic birds, we generally find groups of cranes to scope and observe. Please call Steve & Jan to RSVP, 509-933-1179.

Thank you!
Kittitas County Business Supporting KAS!

Inland Internet
Roslyn
Donates Internet service for our website: www.kittitasaudubon.org

Old Mill Country Store
Ellensburg
Provides a discount on bird seed to KAS members.

DATE CHANGE
Thursday Program is March 14th at 7:00pm

March 2019 Kittitas Audubon Hooter
The 41st Ellensburg Christmas Bird Count • December 15, 2018

Twenty-nine observers in 10 parties, plus four at feeders; 72 party hours, plus 3 hours owling. Partly cloudy all day, 24-38 degrees, 1”-4” snow, ponds mostly frozen, creeks mostly open. **Two species new for the Count, and highest ever counts of 4 species are in boldface.**

Cackling Goose .......................................................21
Canada Goose ....................................................727
**Trumpeter Swan** .............................................22
Gadwall .................................................................2
Am. Wigeon ..........................................................90
Mallard .................................................................736
N. Shoveler ...........................................................3
N. Pintail ...............................................................5
Green-winged Teal ................................................29
Wood Duck ............................................................2
Ring-necked Duck ...............................................50
Bufflehead .............................................................19
Common Goldeneye .............................................12
Hooded Merganser ...............................................43
Common Merganser ............................................81
California Quail ...................................................787
**Common Loon** ................................................1
Pied-billed Grebe ..................................................1
**Great Blue Heron** ............................................83
Bald Eagle (25a,12i) ..............................................37
N. Harrier ............................................................39
Sharp-shinned Hawk ...........................................10
Cooper's Hawk ....................................................14
Red-tailed Hawk ..................................................298
Rough-legged Hawk ............................................22
Buteo, sp ...............................................................2
Golden Eagle ........................................................2
Am. Kestrel ..........................................................103
Prairie Falcon .......................................................2
Peregrine ..............................................................1
Am. Coot ..............................................................1
Virginia Rail ........................................................3
Killdeer .................................................................9
Wilson's Snipe .....................................................3
Eur. Collared Dove ..............................................535
Mourning Dove ...................................................202
Barn Owl ..............................................................4
Great Horned Owl ................................................10
W. Screech Owl ....................................................1
Belted Kingfisher .................................................24

Hairy Woodpecker ...............................................3
N. Flicker ............................................................108
Northern Shrike ..................................................1
Steller’s Jay ..........................................................42
Scrub Jay ............................................................2
Black-billed Magpie .............................................562
Am. Crow .............................................................20
Raven .................................................................105
Black-capped Chickadee .....................................321
Mountain Chickadee ..........................................1
Red-breasted Nuthatch .......................................15
Brown Creeper ....................................................1
Bewick’s Wren .....................................................19
Pacific Wren .......................................................1
Marsh Wren ........................................................1
Am. Dipper ...........................................................5
Golden-crowned Kinglet .....................................22
Ruby-crowned Kinglet ........................................12
Hermit Thrush .....................................................1
Am. Robin ...........................................................152
Varied Thrush .....................................................67
Starling ...............................................................4289
Audubon's Warbler .............................................1
Spotted Towhee ...................................................6
Fox Sparrow .......................................................1
Song Sparrow .....................................................94
White-crowned Sparrow ....................................190
Golden-crowned Sparrow ..................................21
Dark-eyed Junco ...............................................685
“Slate-colored Junco” ..........................................1
Red-winged Blackbird .........................................433
Brewer’s Blackbird ..............................................115
Brown-headed Cowbird .....................................2
Western Meadowlark ..........................................1
House Finch .......................................................655
Purple Finch ......................................................16
Pine Siskin ..........................................................345
Am. Goldfinch ....................................................345
House Sparrow ...................................................865
Anna’s Hummingbird ..........................................1
Downy Woodpecker ..........................................63

**TOTAL BIRDS:** 13,500  
**TOTAL SPECIES:** 81

Seen also during Count Week: **Great Egret**, Wild Turkey, Merlin, Barred Owl
Observers: Renee Adams, Jeb & Gloria Baldi (co-compiler), Laura Busby, Terry Carkner, Gordon Crane, Joan Cawley-Crane, Gary & Gia Cummisk, Scott Downes, Sierra Downes, Deb Essman, Tom & Diane Gauron, Justin Gibbens, Steve & Linda Hall, Judy Hallisey, Doug Kuehn, Rich Layman, Hal & Gloria Lindstrom, Steve Loitz, Phil Mattocks (co-compiler), Leslie McGillard, Steve Moore, Norm Peck, JoEllen Richards, Gerry & Allison Scoville, Roma Stokes, Margy Taylor, and Cricket Webb, for the Kittitas Audubon Society.

The Count this year was a lot like last year. The weather and snow cover were very similar, and the total number of species found on Count Day plus Count Week (the three days before and the 3 days after Count Day) was exactly the same. This year there were 3 more observers, who spent 8 more total field hours, and saw a thousand more individual birds. Among these was the first ever Common Loon for our CBC, found on a small pond near Thorp. Some observers believed it to be injured or sick, and it was not noted when it left the area. On the same pond near the loon was a flock of 22 Trumpeter Swans, for double the previous high count.

Wood Ducks have only been seen before on 8 of the 41 CBCs here, with a high count of 2. This year there were 2 seen on the Ellensburg Sewage Treatment Pond. The Mallard count increased over last year to about 3 times their 12-year average. The count of 83 Great Blue Herons was double their 12-year average. Many of these were out in partially snow-covered fields picking off voles. A Great Egret flew south over Deb Essman’s house a few days before the Count for our first record during Count Week.

Peregrines have been found on only four previous Ellensburg CBCs. This year one was seen well on the Reecer Creek area. All other falcons, hawks, and eagles were found in about normal numbers.

For only the second year since they were first found here the numbers of Collared Dove were lower than last year; about 30% lower. Numbers of Mourning Doves were down about 25%, and numbers of Rock Pigeons were almost the same as last year. I don’t know what to make of this. We’ll just keep on counting.

An Anna’s Hummingbird was again found at Norm Peck’s feeder in town, and it has been seen several times since the Count. It is not around every day, and Norm thinks it may be sharing time with another feeder. Two California Scrub Jays, another recent immigrant from the south, were seen at their outpost in Ellensburg. Bewick’s Wrens have come to be a normal component of our winter birds, since their first discovery in 2003. High counts for these wrens were in 2011-2015.

The 67 Varied Thrush is the highest count since an amazing 153 in 1987. These birds of the high Cascades have received a lot of local attention. Likewise, flocks of Robins and Starlings have roamed the town, stripping fruit from the Mt Ash and crabapple trees. Numbers of Robins on the CBC were the highest since 2012, and Starlings the highest since 2009. No waxwings were seen for the first time since 2009, and one of the few of our 41 counts ever.

An Audubon’s Warbler was again seen this year; this time in the trees in front of the sewage treatment plant. Numbers of sparrows, blackbirds, and finches were found in normal numbers. However, there was a significant decrease in the count of House Sparrows.

Thanks to all observers. As we keep saying, these data become more valuable with each year. Put Saturday, December 14th, 2019 on your calendar, and many thanks to our hosts Steve and Linda Hall.

Gloria Baldi & Phil Mattocks, compilers.